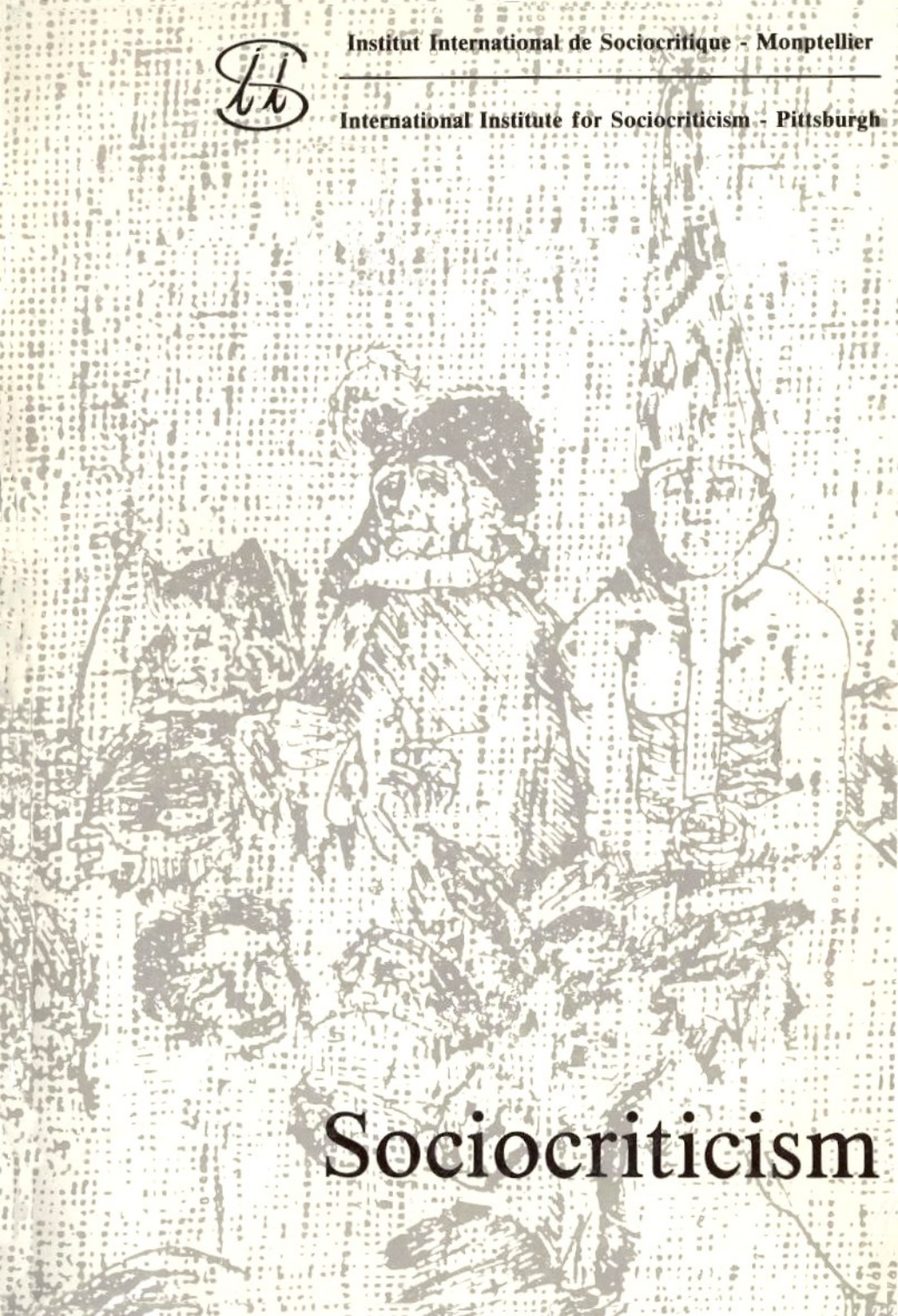




Institut International de Sociocritique - Montpellier

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# Sociocriticism



Institut International de Sociocritique.- Montpellier  
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Theories and Perspectives II

# Sociocriticism

n° 2 décembre 1985

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Sociocriticism

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## I. THE SPECIFICITY OF LITERARY FIELD

## I. THE SPECIFICITY OF LITERARY FIELD

## THE GENESIS OF THE CONCEPTS OF Habitus AND OF Field \*

Pierre Bourdieu

### 1.1. The concepts

\* This text was originally published in French in 1984. The following year it was translated into English by Richard Nice. The text is reproduced here in its original form, with some minor corrections to the translation.

## THE GENESIS OF THE CONCEPTS OF *Habitus* AND OF *Field* \*

Pierre Bourdieu

By presenting here in a more synthetic and systematic manner, the findings that I was able to obtain, over the years, through an application to different universes of the same mode of thinking - namely the one designated by the notion of field - I hope to bring together the continuing diversity of this on-going research and the coherence which a retrospective glance can reinforce.

Unlike theoretical theory, a prophetic or programmatic discourse which is its own end, and which stems from and lives by confrontation with other theories, scientific theory emerges as a program of perception and of action which is disclosed only in the empirical work in which it is actualized. It is a temporary construct which takes shape for and by empirical work and which gains less by theoretical polemics than by confrontation with new objects. Consequently, to truly side with science means making a choice, a rather ascetic one, to devote more time and effort to the exercise of theoretical findings by applying them to new research projects rather than to preparing them somehow for sale by dressing them in the trappings of a meta-discourse - destined less to verifying the thought than to publicizing its importance and value or to making its benefits immediately apparent by circulating it in the innumerable

\* Translated from French by Channa Newman. The following text is destined to be the Introduction of a book in which Pierre Bourdieu presents the synthesis of his researches where he sets up and applies the concepts of *habitus* and of *field* (mainly about literary and artistic field but also about religious, scientific etc...fields).



events that the jet age and the age of conferences provide for the narcissistic researcher. Opting for science also means that one runs the risk of appearing to be a sectarian or a provincial isolationist. This is especially so because the collective practice of the same *modus operandi*, something which is so common in the more advanced sciences, seems to strengthen this impression of a totalitarian monism.<sup>1</sup>

To treat theory as a *modus operandi* which directs and organizes practically scientific practice, means obviously that one has given up the somewhat fetishistic accommodativeness that « theoreticians » usually establish with it. That is why it never seemed to me that it is indispensable to trace the genealogy of concepts which, not having been born of theoretical parthenogenesis, don't gain much by being resituated in relation to previous usages and whose function above all is to designate, in stenographic manner, within the research procedure, a theoretical stance, a principle of methodological choices, negative as well as positive. Thus, for example, the notion of habitus expresses first and foremost the rejection of a whole series of alternatives into which social science (and more generally, all of anthropological theory) has locked itself, that of consciousness (or of subject) and

<sup>1</sup> Some of the studies whose results are presented in this book have already been the subject of publications, and have themselves served as a basis - over a period of some twenty years - for studies on which I will draw for support in these texts which aim to integrate the findings. The theoretical and methodological principles which have guided these works were originally presented in a seminar held at the Ecole normale supérieure between the 60's and the 80's and which, despite the fact that it always had a limited number of participants (notably Jean-Claude Chamboredon, Christophe Charle, Remi Ponton, Jean-Louis Fabiani, Pierre-Michel Menger and others) was initially conceived as a vast collective enterprise committed to covering the totality of literary and artistic production of 19th century France (thanks especially to the elaboration of a common card file destined to serve as the basis for different kinds of analyses.) The method is visible only in the results whose production it promotes, and when it is a demanding method, its operation, which requires much intelligence and inventiveness, also requires much work: it follows that it is difficult to put forth and to highlight theoretical principles and concepts which have functioned practically in the form of suggestions, indications, advices or corrections offered in the setting of seminars or of work-groups - without running the risk of being unfair to all those who made these theories and concepts function and who contributed by so doing to the perfection of these very theories. This is especially so, since in the land of philosophy teachers, the adoption of an ensemble of *thinking tools* can be seen only as proof of blind submission to a totalitarian boss or of the surrendering of the self to a charismatic leader. Such a notion regarding collective intellectual work is probably one of the major causes of the total or partial failures of collective enterprises.

of the unconscious, that of Finalism and of Mechanicalism, etc... I introduced this notion, on the occasion of the publication in French of two articles by Panofsky which up to that point had never been looked at together; one on gothic architecture where the word *habitus* was used as an « indigenous » concept, to explain the effect of scholastic thinking in the area of architecture, the other article on the abbot Suger, where one could also make it work.<sup>2</sup> At the time the notion of habitus allowed me to break away from the structuralist paradigm without falling back into the old philosophy of the subject or of consciousness, that of classical economy and of its *homo economicus* which is back these days under the new name of methodological individualism. By taking up the old aristotelian notion of *hexis*, converted by scholasticism into *habitus*, I wished to react against structuralism and its odd philosophy of action which, implicit in the Levi-Straussian notion of the unconscious, was expressed in all clarity among Althusserians, with their agent reduced to the role of bearer-*Träger* - of the structure; I did this by removing Panofsky from the neo-Kantian philosophy of « symbolic forms », in which he had remained imprisoned (even if to do it meant taking a rather forced advantage of the use, unique in his work, that he made there of the notion of habitus.)

Close on this point to Chomsky who developed at the same time and against the same adversaries, the notion of *generative grammar*, I wished to put forward the « creative », active, and inventive capacities of habitus and of agent (which the word usually does not convey) but to do so by recalling that this generative power is not one of a universal mind, nature or of human reason, as in Chomsky *-habitus*, as the word says, is an experience and also a possession, a capital- or in the idealist tradition of a transcendental subject *-habitus*, *hexis*, means the incorporated and quasi-postural disposition-, but that of an acting agent: it was a matter of recalling « the primacy of practical reason, » of which Fichte spoke, while at the same time taking from idealism, as Marx suggested in the *Theses on Feuerbach* the « active side » of practical knowledge which the materialistic tradition, notably in the theory of « reflection », had yielded to it.

The first uses that I was able to make of the notion of habitus probably contained more or less all of that - but only in an implicit

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis and its Art Treasures*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1946; *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, Latrobe (Pennsylvania), The Archabbey Press, 1951.

state : they were the product not of a theoretical calculation similar to the one that I have just performed at the price of a systematic signalling of theoretical space, but of practical strategy of scientific habitus, a kind of « feel » of the game which does not need to calculate in order to find its direction and place in a reasonable manner in space. Still, I believe that the choice of this old word which, despite some occasional uses, has for so long been relegated to oblivion is not alien to the subsequent accomplishment of the concept. Those who, intending to reduce or destroy, wish to take the word back to its point of origin will surely discover if they carry on their research with intelligence, that its theoretical advantage resided precisely in the direction of research that it designated and which is at the very source of the overstepping which it made possible. It seems to me in fact that in all cases those who used the word *habitus* were inspired by a theoretical intention not far removed from mine which was : to get out from under the philosophy of consciousness without doing away with the agent, in its truth of a practical operator of object constructions : either as in Hegel, who in the same perspective goes back also to notions such as *ethos*, and where the notion of *hexis* (the Greek equivalent of *habitus*) expresses the willingness to break with Kantian dualism and to reintroduce the lasting « dispositions » which are constitutive of the « actualized morality » (*Sittlichkeit*) - in opposition to the abstract *moralism* of pure and formal morality of duty; or else as in Husserl, where the same concept and related notions such as the one of *Habitualität* mark the effort to move out of the philosophy of consciousness by reintroducing, like Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty who do not use the word, a relationship of ontological complicity with the world; or still, as in Mauss, who rediscovers the corporal dimension of *hexis* as behaviour, deportment, and where it serves to express the systematic functioning of the socialized body.

Diametrically opposed to the strategy which consists of an attempt to associate its name with a neologism, or, using the model of the natural sciences, with an effect, even a minor one, and thereby to make its rating rise in the Citation Index<sup>3</sup>, the treatment which consists of taking up, in order to reactivate it, a word belonging

<sup>3</sup> This strategy, which is the positivistic small change of the traditional ambition to have one's name attached to a school or to a system, and through that to a world view, has the appearance of scientific humility.

to a tradition, is inspired by the conviction that the work of conceptualizing can itself also be cumulative. What the search for originality at all costs, often made easy by ignorance, and religious loyalty to such or such a canonical writer, which leads to ritualistic repetition, have in common is that they prohibit a fair attitude toward theoretical tradition, the one which consists of affirming as inseparable both continuity and rupture, conservation and going beyond it, and of seeking support from all available thought without fear of being accused of imitation or of eclecticism, in order to go beyond the precursors, whose work is thus outdistanced by a new use of the instruments which they have contributed to produce.<sup>4</sup> The capacity to actively reproduce the best products of past thinkers by putting into use the instruments of production which they have left behind, is the condition which allows access to a thought which is truly productive.

Similarly the elaboration and the transmission of effective and fertile methods of thinking have nothing to do with the flow of « ideas » such as one normally imagines it : if I'm allowed this analogy, scientific works are like music which is made not merely for passive listening, or even playing, but rather in order to furnish principles of composition. To understand scientific works, which unlike theoretical texts, call forth practical application and not contemplation, means that one has to make the way of thinking which is expressed there function practically à propos a different object to reactivate it in a new act of production which is as inventive and as original as the initial act, and which is absolutely opposed to the de-actualizing *commentary* of the *lector*, a sterilizing and impotent meta-discourse; that is why, although often discredited as being the servile imitation of a disciple, or a mechanical application of an art of invention already invented, the active appropriation of a mode of scientific thought is as difficult and as rare, and not only because of the effects of knowledge that it produces, as its initial elaboration. One of the numerous reasons

<sup>4</sup> There again, the social sciences are in a position that is not favorable to the establishment of such a realistic rapport to theoretical heritage : the values of originality, which are those of the literary, artistic and philosophical fields, continue to guide judgments; they discredit as servile or derivative the wish to acquire specific tools of production by subscribing to a tradition and, in so doing, joining in a collective enterprise, they favor bluffing games with no tomorrow through which the petty entrepreneurs without capital aim to link their name to a manufacturer's brand name - one sees this in the domain of criticism where today there is no author who does not take on the name of a school in -ism, -ic, or -logy.



which create particular difficulties for the social sciences is the fact that they call for bringing together a grand ambition with extreme humility: the humility is necessary if one wishes to master practically, by incorporating it as an *habitus*, the ensemble of the spread and *barely formalized* attainments of the discipline (and that in face of the fact that the false originality of arrogance or of ignorance continues to be viewed with favor); the ambition is indispensable in order to attempt to total up in an application which is truly cumulative the body of knowledge and of know-how gathered in and through all the acts of knowledge accomplished by the corporation of the best of the forerunners and contemporaries.

The same dispositions were at the base of the use of a concept such as *field*. There too the notion initially served to indicate a direction of research, defined negatively, as a rejection of the alternative of internal interpretation and of external explication, before which were placed all the sciences of cultural works, religious sciences, art history or literary history: in these matters the opposition between a formalism born of the theorizing of an art which achieved a high degree of autonomy and a reductionism intent on directly relating artistic forms to social forms, with which, along with Lukacs and Goldmann, Marxism, despite the notion of relative autonomy, tended to identify itself, hid the fact that both of these trends disregarded the field of production as a social space of objective relationships. It follows once again that genealogical investigation - which would lead us to authors as far removed from one another as Trier or Kurt Lewin - would yield infinitely less than a reference to the *ancestry* or to the theoretical *line* in which the use of the word inscribed the entire undertaking: the *relational* mode of thinking (rather than structuralist) which, as was shown by Cassirer<sup>5</sup> who made it explicit, is the one shared by all modern science<sup>6</sup> and is probably what unifies undertakings so different in appearance as those of the Russian formalists - and particularly

<sup>5</sup> E. Cassirer, *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff*, Berlin, 1910 (Reprint: Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969).

<sup>6</sup> I had attempted to unravel, in an article written during the heyday of structuralism, the conditions of the application of the relational mode of thinking to the social sciences. This mode of thinking which has become part of natural sciences and which because it hasn't been thought out clearly in its principles, found itself slowly being distorted, oblique or perverted, within the different forms of structuralism (cf. P. Bourdieu, « Structuralism and Theory of Sociological Knowledge », *Social Research*, XXV, 4, Winter 1968, pp. 681-706).

Tynianov<sup>7</sup> -, of Lewin or of Elias and also, obviously, those of the Structuralists, in linguistics as well as in anthropology.<sup>8</sup> The particular difficulty of applying this universal mode of thinking to social matters stems from the fact that it requires a break with the ordinary perception of the social world. It is thus, that in order to truly construct the notion of field, it was necessary to go beyond the first attempt to analyze the « intellectual field »<sup>9</sup> as a relatively autonomous universe of specific relationships: in fact the immediately visible relationships between the agents involved in the intellectual life, especially the interactions among the authors or the authors and editors, had concealed the objective relationships between the positions occupied by these agents, positions which determine the form of these interactions. And the first rigorous elaboration of the notion came out of a reading of the chapter, in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, which is devoted to the sociology of religion, a reading which, being permanently referred to the intellectual field, wasn't at all an academic commentary: at the cost of a critique of the interactional view of the relationships between the religious agents proposed by Weber and which implied a retrospective critique of my first elaboration of the intellectual field, I proposed a construct of the religious field as a *structure of objective relationships* permitting the accounting for the concrete form of the *interactions* that Max Weber described as a *realist*

<sup>7</sup> On the link between the Russian formalists and Cassirer one could consult P. Steiner, *Russian Formalism, A Metapoetics*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1984, pp. 101-104.

<sup>8</sup> This unity of the theoretical line is at the base of affinities which are first vaguely felt, and of encounters, most often discovered after the fact, which one must not describe as borrowed, and which are the product of the separate putting into practice of the same schema (this will be seen further a propos the Russian formalists). Nothing is more joyful in intellectual work, than the discovery of the same idea, except for a difference of form, in different authors, especially when the principle of that encounter is perfectly clear. One thinks of Baudelaire: « Well, I'm accused, me, of imitating Edgar Poe! Do you know why I have translated Poe so patiently? Because he resembled me. The first time I opened one of his books, I saw with terror and delight, not only subjects dreamed by me, but sentences, thought by me, and written by him, twenty years before... » (C. Baudelaire, *A Théophile Thoré*, 1863, in *Baudelaire critique d'art*, Paris, Club des libraires, 1956, p. 179).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. P. Bourdieu, « Champ intellectuel et projet créateur ». *Les Temps Modernes. Problèmes du structuralisme*, 246, novembre 1966, pp. 865-906. English Translation « Intellectual Field and Creative Project », *Social Science Information*, VIII, 2, April 1969, pp. 89-119 and in: *Knowledge and Control, New Directions for the Sociology of Education*, Michael F.D. Young ed., London, Collier-Macmillan, 1971, pp. 161-188.

typology.<sup>10</sup> There remained only the need to put to work this thinking tool defined in this manner in order to discover, by applying it to different fields, the specific properties of each field: haute couture, literature, philosophy, politics, etc... as well as the invariables which a comparison of the different universes treated as « particular instances of the possible » might reveal. Far from functioning as mere metaphors, guided by rhetorical intentions at persuasion, the methodical transfers of models founded on the hypothesis that there exist structural and functional homologies among all fields, possess an eminent heuristic virtue, the one that epistemological tradition recognizes in analogy. In addition, the patient and repeated practical applying of the method is one of the possible ways (and for me the most accessible and the most acceptable) of « semantic ascent » (in Quine's sense) which makes it possible to bring to a higher degree of generalization and of formalization the theoretical principles involved in the empirical study of different universes and the invariable laws of structure and history of the different fields. These, because of the particularities of their function and of their functioning (or, more simply put, because of the sources of information which concern them) yield more or less clearly properties which are shared by all fields: thus, the field of haute couture, probably because it is culturally less legitimate, censures less forcefully the « economic » aspects of practices and is less protected against objectivization, which always implies a form of desacralization, has introduced more directly than any other universe, to one of the most fundamental properties of all fields of cultural production, the properly magical logic of the producer's production and of the product as fetishes.

But the fact of asking a given case study to provide the solution to a canonical problem, and above all a study such as this, which is devoted to the universe of fashion, most frivolous of all, presupposed a transformation of the representation of intellectual work which is not unrelated to the transformation effected by those whom Erich Auerbach calls the inventors of the modern novel,

<sup>10</sup> Cf. P. Bourdieu, « Une interprétation de la sociologie religieuse de Max Weber ». *Archives européennes de Sociologie*, XII, 1, 1971, pp. 3-21. Although, here again, the intention to reduce the proper effect of reading evidently accounts for something, one can also ascribe to the ex-post evidence of the « structuralist » reinterpretation which I proposed the fact that, since the first volume of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* has been finally translated in French, one attributes routinely to Weber himself (I understandably do not cite references) concepts such as those of religious field or of symbolic capital and a mode of thinking all of which are clearly alien to the logic of his thought.

namely Virginia Woolf, Joyce and Faulkner: « The great exterior turning points and blows of fate are granted less importance; they are credited with less power of yielding decisive information concerning the subject; on the other hand there is confidence that in any random fragment plucked from the course of life at any time the totality of its fate is contained and can be portrayed. There is greater confidence in syntheses gained through full exploitation of an everyday occurrence than in a chronologically well-ordered total treatment which accompanies the subject from beginning to end, attempts not to omit anything externally important and emphasizes the great turning points of destiny ». <sup>11</sup> One cannot in fact « go back to the things themselves » by immersing oneself in the specificity of a particular case (the Impressionist revolution for example) in order to attempt to uncover in them something essential (the transhistorical truth of symbolic revolutions for example) unless one repudiates the academic hierarchy of genres and of objects which, having been banished from literature and painting since the 19th century, is still being perpetuated in philosophical tradition, as for example, in its haughty condemnation of « historicism ».

The general theory of fields which has thus been worked out slowly <sup>12</sup> owes nothing, despite appearances, to the more or less reconsidered transfer of the economical mode of thinking; even if in reinterpreting from a relational perspective Weber's analysis which applied to religion a certain number of concepts borrowed from economics (such as competition, monopoly, supply, demand, etc...) I found myself directly facing general properties valid for different fields, which had been brought to light by economic theory but whose true theoretical foundation was not confined by it. Rather than viewing the transfer as *responsible* for object construction - such as in cases where one borrows from a preferably prestigious universe, ethnology, linguistics or economics, a decontextualized notion, a mere metaphor whose function is purely emblematic - it is the object construction which calls forth the transfer and establishes it: thus, in analyzing the social uses of language, the

<sup>11</sup> E. Auerbach, *Mimesis: A Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. by Willard Trask, Doubleday/Anchor, 1957, p. 484.

<sup>12</sup> I have tried to isolate the general properties of fields by taking the different analyses, conducted in the courses that I gave at the Collège de France in 1983 and 1984 and which will be the object of a subsequent publication, to a higher level of formalization.



break with the vague and empty notion of « situation » - which itself introduced a break with the Saussurian or Chomskian model - forces one to view the relationships of linguistic exchange as so many markets which are specified according to the structure of the relationships among the linguistic or cultural capitals of the interlocutors or of the groups. And, as I hope to be able to demonstrate one day, everything leads to the assumption that, far from being the founding model, economic theory must probably be seen as a particular instance of the field theory which emerges slowly from generalization to generalization, and which, as it promotes the understanding of the potential fecundity and the limits of validity of transfers such as the one worked out by Weber, obliges one to rethink the presuppositions on which economic theory is based, and to do so precisely in the light of the attainments brought out by the analysis of the fields of cultural production.<sup>13</sup>

The general theory of the economy of fields makes it possible to describe and to define the *specific form* taken by the most general mechanisms and concepts such as capital, investment, interest, within each field, and thus it allows one to avoid all kinds of reductionism, beginning with economism, which recognizes as valuable only material interest and the quest for the maximizing of monetary profit. To understand the social genesis of a field and to grasp what constitutes the specific necessity of the belief that supports it, of the language game which operates in it and of the material and symbolic stakes which are engendered in it, is to account for, to *necessitate* to wrest the producers' actions and the works they produce from the absurdity of arbitrariness and of motivelessness, rather than, as one ordinarily believes, to reduce or to destroy. It is no doubt tempting, as Wittgenstein notes in the *Lessons on Ethics* to abandon oneself to the pleasures of « destroying prejudices » and « certain types of explication are irresistibly attractive (...), particularly an analysis of the type : 'this is only that' » ; nevertheless in order to combat all sorts of *escapisms*

<sup>13</sup> The analysis (now in progress) of an economic universe such as the field of housing development, uncovers a number of features already observed in fields such as haute couture or even painting and literature : for example the role of investments destined to produce confidence in the inseparable economic and symbolic values of a product or the fact that in this domain as elsewhere, business strategies depend on their position in the field of production, that is to say in the structure of the distribution of the *specific capital* (in which one must include the « reputation » of the brand name).

which tend to see in art a new form of the illusion of backward worlds, science must consider the work of art in its dual necessity : first, the internal necessity of this miraculous object which seems to defy contingency and accident, an object, in short, which seems to necessitate itself and in the same stroke necessitate its referent : second, the external necessity of the encounter between a trajectory and a field, between an expressive impulse and a space of expressive possibilities, which causes the work to transcend the two histories of which it is a product, while simultaneously fulfilling them both.

One never goes beyond history and the science of man can only set as its goal the reappropriation, through an awareness, of the imperative which is inscribed in history, and it must, in particular, gain a theoretical mastery of the historical conditions in which transhistorical necessities may emerge. One has to be willing, for example, to be blinded by fetishistic illusion to succeed in forgetting that the solution to the problem of « literarity », so dear to the Russian formalists, can only be found in the history of the literary field and not elsewhere : all analyses of essence and all formal definitions could not hide, indeed, the fact that the affirmation of the specificity of the « literary » or of the « pictorial » and of the impossibility to reduce it to any other form of expression, is inseparable from the affirmation of the autonomy of the field of production which it simultaneously presupposes and reinforces. The movement of the literary field or of the artistic field towards autonomy can be understood as a process of refinement through which each genre is directed towards that which distinguishes and defines it properly, even above and beyond the socially known and recognized exterior signs of its identity. The Formalists, especially Jakobson, who is familiar with phenomenology, have merely taken up again (in a more methodical and consequential manner) the old questions posed by critics of the academic tradition on the nature of genres, theatre, novel or poetry; and, in doing so, they have become guilty, along with the entire tradition of thought concerned with « pure poetry » or « theatricality », of constituting as transhistorical essence that which in reality is no more than a kind of *historical quintessence*, that is to say, the product of slow and prolonged working of historical alchemy which accompanies the process of the autonomization of the fields of cultural production. Indeed, from refinement to refinement the struggles, for which the field of poetic production is the locus, have led slowly to the isolation of the essential principle of the poetic effect, that is to say the essential of that which separates poetry from prose. By making the

secondary traits such as rhyme and rhythm, for example, disappear along with free verse, they have left only a sort of highly concentrated extract (as in Francis Ponge, for instance) of the properties which are best suited to the production of the poetic effect of debanalization of words and things, the *ostranenie* of the Russian formalists, and that without resorting to the techniques which are socially designated as « poetic ». Each time one of these relatively autonomous universes is established, artistic field, scientific field or one or another of their specifications, the historical process which is set up in it, plays the same role of *abstractor of quintessence*. So much so, that the analysis of the history of the field is, in itself, the only legitimate form of the analysis of essence.<sup>14</sup>

But, one may say, what is gained, other than the slightly perverse pleasure of disenchantment, by this historical reduction of what strives to be an absolute experience, alien to the contingencies of a historical genesis? There is a history of reason which does not have reason as principle; a history of truth, of beauty, of good, which does not have as its sole motive the search for truth, beauty or virtue. The relative autonomy of the artistic field as a space of objective relationships by reference to which the relationship between each agent and its own work, past or present, is objectively defined, is what confers upon the history of art its relative autonomy, and consequently, its original logic. In order to account for the fact that art seems to find within itself the principle and the norm of its evolution, (as if the history were internal to the system and as if the becoming of forms of representations or of expressions only expressed the internal logic of the system), it is not necessary to hypostasize as it has often been done, the laws of this evolution; if there exists a history which is properly artistic, it means, among other things, that the artists and their products are objectively situated, if only because they belong to the artistic field, in relation to other artists and their products and that even the most properly esthetic breaks with artistic tradition always owe something to the relative position within the field of those who uphold it and those who try to break it. « The action of works upon works, » of which Brunetière spoke, is never exercised except

<sup>14</sup> It is thus that the analysis of the pure esthetic disposition which is called forth by the most advanced forms of art is inseparable from the analysis of the process of autonomization of the field of production. And similarly, epistemology cannot be separated, neither in fact nor by right, from the social history of science.

through the intermediary of authors whose strategies also owe their form, their logic and their content to their relative position in the structure of the intellectual field.<sup>15</sup> The researcher who seeks the principle of the existence of the work, what it has that is historic or transhistoric - « the eternal charm of Greek art » - within the interests linked to the belonging to a field of cultural production, and, more broadly, to the social field in its totality, treats the work as an intentional sign associated with and regulated by some other thing, of which it is also a symptom. The researcher looks for the objective intention which is hidden beneath the declared intention. He supposes that a profound meaning, an expressive impulse, biological or social, is enunciated in it, a meaning which the alchemy of the setting into-form imposed by the social necessity of the field tends to disguise, especially by forcing the impulse to deny itself and to universalize itself. In contrast to the angelic pure interest for pure form, the analysis which apprehends in one and the same motion the expressive impulse, the censure and the sublimation assured by the working into-form, offers a realistic view, that is to say, a truer and at the same time definitively a more reassuring view of the collective work of sublimation which is at the base of the greatest triumphs of human enterprise : history cannot produce

<sup>15</sup> The resistance to scientific analysis has infinite resources, as one sees in this presentation of my analyses : « Bourdieu on the other hand (contrary to Adorno) defends a functional approach. He analyzes the actions of subjects in what he calls the 'cultural field' by taking into account the chances to gain power and prestige exclusively and considers objects simply as strategic means which are used by producers in their struggle for power. » (P. Bürger, On the Literary history, *Poetics*, vol. 14, n 3/4, August 1985, pp. 199-207; underlined by me). A very common strategy which consists of accusing of reductionism a theory one has previously reduced, Peter Bürger substitutes strategies which are exclusively and explicitly guided by a kind of generic will of power which could be exercised in the political field as well as in the economic field, to practical and overdetermined strategies which are not necessarily conscious and calculated and which express the intertwined social and esthetic interests associated with a position in the field. He thus eliminates the specificity of the esthetic struggles and of the interests which are involved in them, in short he makes disappear the very thing that the notion of field aimed to reveal : in reality, the struggles which occur within the intellectual field have as a stake symbolic power, that is to say, the power over a particular use of a particular category of signs and, through that, on the vision and the meaning of the natural and social world. This is too great of an oversight concerning a point which is too obvious to be considered as disinterested; it is therefore, a strategic oversight (strategic in the sense that I understand the word), that is, one guided, in all innocence, as are all forms of rejection of knowledge, by the interests attached to a particular position.

he transhistorical universality except by producing, by means of often ruthless struggles of special interests, social universes which, through the effect of the social alchemy of their historical laws of functioning, tend to extract from the confrontation of the special interests the sublimated essence of the universal. Hagiographic exaltation and reductive disparagement share the tendency to seek the source of great works in great men; and to overlook everything, in the most sublime practices and productions, which depends on the logic of these paradoxical universes where, among other reasons because they can reap profit from proving unselfishness certain men can find an incentive to surpass themselves or, at least, to produce actions or works which go beyond their intentions and their interests.

## CHAMP, APPAREIL OU INSTITUTION ? (NOTE)

*Jacques Dubois*

Le courant sociocritique a fait de l'idéologie sa catégorie centrale et la médiation majeure entre sphère littéraire et formation sociale. Il a de la sorte inscrit l'analyse dans une problématique féconde comme en témoignent les nombreux travaux qu'il a suscités. Certes, le concept d'idéologie ne semble plus avoir aujourd'hui la même séduction ni la même pertinence que naguère. Mais sa présence plus discrète dans les débats s'explique par une évolution assez classique. D'une part, l'analyse s'est diversifiée en des méthodologies qui font leur chemin séparément; de l'autre, ce qu'avait de massif et de provocant le concept premier s'est retraduit dans des notions moins éclatantes mais mieux fondées telles que discours, sociolecte ou intertextualité, avec le secours des techniques sémiologiques. Il reste que l'analyse idéologique (et la sociocritique) a toujours été plus ou moins décentrée par un décalage ou un déséquilibre entre pratique des textes et connaissance du social. On décrivait finement la texture idéologique mais on se montrait beaucoup plus incertain lorsqu'il s'agissait de la rapporter à des conditions de production extralittéraires et, par exemple, à des rapports de classes. Il est vrai que les tenants de la méthode ont les études littéraires pour formation et lieu d'origine.

En réponse à ce décalage a pris naissance un autre courant qui a orienté ses investigations vers les structures de production plus que vers la production même et qui a retenu comme site de la médiation « l'institution littéraire » (terme que je ne retiens qu'à titre provisoire puisque l'objet de cette note est de le discuter). Une analyse de l'institution est donc apparue à côté de l'analyse des



idéologies. Sont-elles concurrentes ? Encore que ce qui les articule l'une à l'autre demeure mal précisé, je les verrais plutôt comme complémentaires. Elles ont leur commune origine dans la notion d'appareil idéologique : passant de l'une à l'autre, on ne fait que changer de versant.

En fait, l'analyse d'institution vient combler un vide, en opérant sur un niveau de la structure qu'avait négligé la sociologie des pratiques littéraires. Partons d'une représentation assez classique de la totalité sociale qui distingue l'instance socio-économique (catégorie principale : les classes), l'instance juridico-politique (les appareils), l'instance idéologique (les discours). Elle permet de constater que l'analyse sociologique a rapporté les productions littéraires au premier et au troisième de ces niveaux mais a manqué largement le deuxième. Autrement dit, l'ensemble appelé littérature n'a pas été interrogé en tant que juridiction, organisation et lieu de pouvoir. Et c'est pourtant cette instance qui lui confère définition et légitimité.

Pour l'analyse d'institution, la littérature fonctionne comme système normalisé au sein de la formation sociale; ses agents producteurs (les écrivains) et ses productions (les œuvres ou textes) sont désignés par l'arbitraire (relatif) qui fonde le système et déterminés par l'autonomie (relative) qui le délimite et le spécifie. Ainsi se dégage une médiation qui, ne serait-ce que par sa dominante matérielle, est bien distincte de l'idéologie mais sans pour autant s'en détacher puisque l'occultation du système et de son arbitraire est l'effet idéologique premier lié à la représentation de la littérature. La dénégation de cette dernière en tant qu'institution est si vive et si tenace qu'elle a été et est encore partagée par les sociologies. Mais il est vrai aussi que l'on a affaire à une institution « pas comme les autres », dont les traits définitoires sont largement paradoxaux. C'est ce que fera ressortir la comparaison qui suit.

Cette analyse se constitue au point de rencontre de plusieurs démarches. On ne peut donc en attendre qu'elle soit pleinement unifiée et l'on ne s'étonnera pas de voir que l'objet qu'elle tente de construire soit, en fonction de la cohérence de chaque théorie, désigné par des termes différents. La présente note entend simplement relever les trois termes qui ont ainsi prévalu jusqu'ici et comparer les concepts qu'ils recouvrent en les détachant partiellement des théories dont ils relèvent. Exercice sans prétention et qui vise plus à clarifier des usages qu'à souligner ou à accentuer des concurrences. Le propos n'est donc pas d'accorder privilège à

un concept aux dépens des autres mais de faire ressortir, pour chacun et à la faveur du jeu comparatif, des implications et des options.

Le mode d'analyse qui nous occupe s'ébauche sans doute avec la théorie des *appareils idéologiques* élaborée par Louis Althusser<sup>1</sup>. Cette théorie conduit Renée Balibar à montrer que la domination de l'appareil scolaire sur les superstructures (dans le mode de production capitaliste et en régime démocratique) s'exerce notamment sur les pratiques littéraires jusqu'à faire de la littérature une dépendance, une « succursale » de l'Ecole. Par ailleurs, Pierre Bourdieu et son école développent un modèle d'interprétation s'appliquant au domaine culturel dans son ensemble et en particulier au « marché des biens symboliques », donc à la littérature.

La notion de *champ* apparaît ici au premier plan pour désigner les configurations plus ou moins autonomes qui se recoupent à l'intérieur du grand ensemble. Enfin, dans le prolongement de ce modèle et en essayant de l'adapter à certains acquis des études littéraires -comme la théorie des écritures-, j'ai proposé le terme d'*institution* pour rendre compte des normes, instances et formes organisationnelles qui structurent et « régulent » l'activité littéraire, et la notion comme le mot ont trouvé écho dans d'autres analyses.

Reprenons chacun des termes ainsi en présence avant de nous livrer aux réflexions rapides que leur comparaison appelle.

La notion d'*appareil* a son site dans la théorie marxiste. Elle renvoie au découpage de la société moderne en organismes spécialisés qui, de façon immédiate ou médiate, permettent à l'Etat (et à la classe dominante) d'exercer son pouvoir soit sous forme répressive soit par inculcation idéologique. Dans cet usage, « appareil » met à la fois en évidence les idées de contrôle fonctionnel et de reproduction d'une part, d'organisme administratif (avec corps d'agents, base matériel, etc.) de l'autre. Dans une telle conception, la pratique littéraire est assez naturellement rapportée à l'enseignement, aux instances académiques, etc.

*Champ* a de bien autres connotations qu'*appareil*. Extérieurement, c'est un terme moins « engagé », une notion en creux. Il désigne avant tout un système de positions rendu autonome par la cohérence d'une logique. Il privilégie donc la structure aux dépens de l'histoire. Cependant sa conception de la structure est

<sup>1</sup> Bien entendu, des éléments d'analyse institutionnelle sont repérables dans des travaux antérieurs tels que ceux de l'Ecole de Francfort, de Sartre, de la sociologie empiriste des enquêtes sur la lecture et l'édition, etc.



largement dynamique puisque le champ est champ de luttes et d'antagonismes. De surcroît, la théorie prévoit de réintroduire la détermination historique en faisant place à l'interaction entre les champs et en tenant la structure autonome pour une médiation des rapports socio-économiques.

Dernier venu, le terme d'*institution* correspond à la reprise d'une des plus anciennes notions de la sociologie générale. Au point qu'on peut lui reprocher d'emblée son usure et son caractère laxiste. Toutefois, à dénommer un ensemble de pratiques sociales dont le caractère institué a toujours été refusé, il retrouve une vigueur et une vertu critique. Par évocation, la notion met en évidence le caractère normatif et légitimant du système. Même si c'est de façon problématique, elle aligne la littérature sur la série des institutions modernes que l'on connaît en soulignant leur dimension juridique commune.

Ces indications rapides font apparaître, en première approximation, que l'institution fonctionne à plusieurs égards comme terme de compromis entre les deux autres. Ce qu'il offre de lâche dans sa représentation semble compensé par l'articulation qu'il permet de ménager entre autonomie et contrôle ou pouvoir et, par-delà, entre structure et histoire.

Surtout, sa position est médiane en regard du degré d'organisation que chacune des notions implique. L'idée de champ préserve clairement ce qui, dans la sphère littéraire, demeure à l'état inorganisé, non unifié, non contrôlé — et qui n'est pas peu. Il existe un ordre des médecins et non des écrivains comme il existe des ministères de la justice et non de la littérature. En revanche, à dire qu'un système des lettres s'est institué en France au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, on se donne la possibilité de pointer un réseau organisationnel qui, pour fragmentaire et symbolique qu'il soit, possède une réelle efficience. En somme, l'institution fait découvrir l'appareil sous le champ.

Essentielle est également la part que réserve chacune des notions à l'idée de tension ou de conflit social. Le caractère réducteur de l'image d'appareil ressort ici. La conception voulant que la littérature soit au service d'une domination centrale et extérieure à elle escamote, par une sorte de neutralisation, tout le problème des rivalités d'écrivains, des luttes de pouvoir entre écoles. De son côté, l'optique institutionnelle risque de gommer cet aspect et de neutraliser par avance tout antagonisme à travers l'aura consensuel

qu'elle dégage<sup>2</sup>. On notera pourtant que la pensée de l'institution sait se faire dialectique là où elle met en avant les rapports polémiques de l'institué et de l'instituant, ce qui, pour la littérature, est une façon de souligner le conflit central entre orthodoxie et hétérodoxie. Mais, cela dit, il faut admettre que cette même pensée est plus sensible à la connivence qui régit la république des lettres et qui n'est peut-être pas moins « redoutable » que les conflits qui l'agitent. Il reste que, par son insistance sur les luttes symboliques, la théorie des champs a mis au jour l'un des mécanismes décisifs de la reproduction du système littéraire dans l'histoire.

Enfin, on peut interroger les trois concepts sur la façon dont ils prévoient d'articuler l'ensemble appelé littérature à d'autres systèmes, contigus notamment. Ce qui nous ramène en partie à la question du lieu de pouvoir. Dans sa pureté, l'analyse des appareils retient une construction très emboîtée, toute axée sur l'imposition idéologique et le pouvoir d'Etat et placée dans leur dépendance. A quoi la théorie des champs répond par un modèle beaucoup plus flexible qui joue sur des intersections floues : le champ littéraire empiète sur le champ intellectuel qui lui-même relève du champ politique, etc. L'écueil de cette solution élégante est qu'au plan méthodologique aucun critère net ne permet d'arrêter la prolifération des champs que l'on distingue. C'est ici surtout que la position intermédiaire du concept d'institution peut s'avérer opératoire. Il est vrai que le corps des pratiques littéraires n'accède qu'à un degré d'organisation et de codification relativement bas. On peut même prétendre qu'il est plutôt constitué d'un agrégat de « segments » institutionnels (l'édition, l'enseignement littéraire, les académies, la critique médiatique, etc.). Mais il demeure qu'au plan pratique comme au plan théorique il n'est ni une nébuleuse mal délimitée (ce que serait davantage le champ intellectuel) ni un ensemble régional ou subalterne (comme la bande dessinée). En somme, on ne peut guère récuser son accès à un seuil suffisant d'autonomie et de spécificité. Il reviendra cependant à l'analyse, qu'elle se réfère aux champs, aux appareils ou aux institutions, d'interroger de plus près ces notions de seuil et de limites.

<sup>2</sup> Voir à ce sujet la remarque que fait P. Bourdieu dans la note 2 de « Le champ littéraire. Préliminaires critiques et principes de méthode », in *Lendemain* (Berlin), 36, 1984, pp. 3-20.

## TWO HOLY COMMODITIES : THE PRACTICES OF FICTIONAL DISCOURSE AND EROTIC DISCOURSE

Darko Suvin

In two other places I have discussed at some length Marx's treatment of production and creation as well as the application of such a Marxian treatment--particularly from his *Grundrisse*--to culture or cognition.<sup>1</sup> I shall recall here some results of those discussions, and proceed then to rephrase and augment them by drawing a parallel between the 19th-century fundaments of a discourse about the commodification of literature or fiction and a simultaneous, and in many ways consubstantial, discourse about the commodification of love or erotics.

<sup>1</sup> My essays referred to at the beginning are « Transubstantiation of Production and Creation », *The Minnesota R.* n.s. no. 18 (Spring 1982) :102-15, and « The Cognitive Commodity » (forthcoming). The main texts will be cited in the body of the essay as follows (Benjamin in my translation) :

G = Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (New York : Vintage, 1973).

B = Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften* I/1-IV/2 (Frankfurt : Suhrkamp, 1980).

T = Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol.2 (New York & London : Colonial Press, 1900).

I have built at some length on Ernst Bloch's fundamental organon of the « novum » as concerns one particular genre of both « high » and mass fiction in chap. 4 of *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (New Haven, 1979) and Part II of *Victorian Science Fiction in the UK : The Discourse of Knowledge and of Power* (Boston, 1983). Other debts, too large for listing, can be inferred from the beginning of part 2 and the notes. I owe to Don Theall the reference to Joyce, to Marc Angenot many leads into discourse theory, to Bina Freiwald a reminder about transcendental narrative females, and to Franco Moretti and Sandro Portelli encouragements to focus on Benjamin.

### 1. Cognitive Discourse as Commodity : The Novum as Fashion

Marx argues that the sensual or qualitative *use-value* of any product is, in circulation within capitalist society, largely transformed into--and for the rest dominated and alienated by--quantitative *exchange-value*, which depends more on the conditions of exchange (market, money, etc.) than on its intrinsic properties :

the exchange relation establishes itself as a power external to and independent of the producers... The product becomes a commodity; the commodity becomes exchange-value; the exchange value of the commodity is its immanent money-property; this, its money-property, separates itself from it in the form of money, and achieves a general social existence separated from all particular commodities and their natural mode of existence.... (G 146-47)

Thus, production of commodities becomes crucially determined by circulation : capital is « *direct unity*... of production and circulation » (G332). Since circulation is subsumed under accumulation of capital, and radically warped by the profit principle, a basic opposition arises between the product as use-value and as object of such capitalist circulation.

As a result of this underlying state of affairs Marx's conclusion--reached, as is well-known, after long and painstaking argumentation--is that « *there is a limit, not inherent to production generally, but to production founded on capital* (G415). This inherent limit, coinciding with the essence or nature of capital, is reducible to « exchange value as such, as limit of production; or exchange founded on value, or value founded on exchange, as limit of production. This is...again the same as *restriction of the production of use values by exchange value*.... » (G415-16) In other words, while capital tends to acknowledge no limits in the heightening of the productive forces, it « *also and equally* makes onesided, limits etc. the *main force of production, the human being himself* (G422). Capitalism thus, obversely, tends to restrict productive forces. It necessarily institutes a painfully insoluble and recurring contradiction at its centre. This double and contradictory perspective explains its necessity of increasingly substituting machines for workers in all walks of life--of industrializing all aspects of life that can be brought within the cycle of consumption, including « culture. » As Marx himself suggests (e. g. G306 and 587), the contradiction between goods as sensual necessities and as bearers of profit-making circulation is clearest in artistic production

(say in the production, consumption, and circulation of a book manuscript) : the product as « a specific quality, as a specific thing, as a product of specific natural properties, as a substance of need [is] in contradiction with its substance as [exchange-] = value » (G406).

In other terms, the transformation of products into money and commodity has two contradictory yet interlocking historical aspects. Originally, it rendered large-scale production, and therefore mass consumption, possible; and Marx unambiguously admires all such achievements of capitalism, as opposed to any Romantic cries of back to Arcadia. However, the ever increasing dominance of exchange over use-value grows in developed capitalism both into a fundamental and unsurmountable barrier to further production as well as into an agency deforming all qualitative use-values into quantitative exchange-values. E.g. : deforming texts that explore the intrinsic possibilities of their thematic nuclei into texts tailored primarily toward selling well, regardless of all else. As a consequence one can apply also to the production of literature Marx's general observation :

...while capital thus appears as the product of labor, so does the product of labor likewise appear as capital --no longer as a simple product, nor as an exchangeable commodity, but as...*alien property*... and establishes itself opposite living labor as an *alien power*.... Living labor therefore now appears... as mere penurious labor-capacity in face of this reality alienated from it, belonging not to it but to others.... (G453-54)

Such complex and still fundamental insights are obviously confirmed by the experience of the both axiologically and empirically privileged--because extreme and exemplary, i.e. typical--domain of cognitive (e.g. esthetic and fictional) discourse. Marx proceeded from them into a rich sequence of theories which could provide the much needed basis for adequate analysis of social alienations in cultural production of cognition, including fictionality--in science as well as music, plastic arts, literature, movies, comics or TV. Its value lies in its blend of scholarly sophistication and fierce ethico-political value-judgments, which brands capitalist production as hostile to art and poetry, and yet does not condone the artist-producer's cynically giving in to this hostility :

A writer must naturally earn money in order to be able to live and write, but under no circumstances must he live and write in order to earn money.... The writer in no wise considers his work as *means*. It is an *end in itself*; so little is it a means for him and for others that he sacrifices *his* existence, when



necessary; and like a religious preacher, in another sense, he applies the principle; « Obey God rather than men » to the men among whom he is himself confined with his human needs and desires.<sup>2</sup>

Admittedly, such horizons of « needs and desires » and their societal alienations receive only a stimulating first sketch in Marx, culminating in the theory of commodity fetishism in *Capital*. Subsequent official socialist thinkers--both Social-Democratic and Leninist--have on the whole shied away from them. The fate of Lukács's early (and, alas, sole philosophically significant even where flawed) development of such notions in *History and Class Consciousness*, which he was forced to recant, has led to their being developed by Marxist « guerillas, » on the margins of political orthodoxy, with all the strengths and weaknesses arising from this position. Up to the 1970s they were mainly Germans--Adorno, Benjamin, Bloch, Brecht, Enzensberger, Holz, Marcuse, Sohn-Rethel, Winkler; but also Bakhtin (under his own name and the pseudonym of Medvedev), Sartre, Rossi-Landi, and Williams.

I wish to attempt here a summary and perhaps even a development of what I take to be the most significant expansion of these horizons: Walter Benjamin's hypothesis that *there exists a homology or correspondence between commodity production in general and central features of modern literature*--because, and insofar as, it is produced and consumed as a commodity. Both are forms of social relations; both--most importantly for the matter at hand--depend on *novelty* or newness. It is, however, a paradoxical and deeply contradictory novelty because commodity has, as noted above, two types of value: its intrinsic sensual qualities issue in the use-value, while production for the market issues in quantitative exchange-value. Building on arguments in Marx that the devaluation of the sensual world of things alienates the producers/consumers, Benjamin turns his attention to the fact that people's experiences are daily, inexorably molded by a network of inescapable rules based on exchange-value, by the type of social relations signified in the

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Marx's article *Wages* in Mikhail Lifshitz, *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx* (New York, 1977), the best comment on this subject, which should be read together with Istvan Meszaros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (London, 1970), Adolfo Sanchez Vazquez, *Art and Society* (New York, 1973), and Ian Birchall, « The Total Marx and the Marxist Theory of Literature, » in Paul Walton and Stuart Hall, eds., *Situating Marx* (London, 1972). See for a longer discussion of two meanings of production (as creation and as alienation) and of Marx's metamorphic imagery in the *Grundrisse* my « Transubstantiation. »

price of commodities and of labor-power. In commodity production, the product's newness is at the same time necessarily subordinated to the permanent principle of and commitment to circulation as such rather than to what is circulating (a Ford '85 is a private car, etc., just as a Ford '84)--to an « infinite repetition » (das Immerwiedergleiche--B 1/2 :660, 673, and 680). From the 19th-century rise of commodity mass-reproduction and circulation on, the apparently new is intrinsically also the permanently same: « Novelty is a quality which does not depend on the use-value of the commodity....[The] illusion of novelty is reflected, like one mirror in another, in the illusion of infinite sameness. »<sup>3</sup> In Goethe's terms, « the strange » is substituted for « the significant » (cited in B 1/1 :152).

This type of approach is not applicable to literature only. If at all valid, it necessarily applies to the whole anthropology of production and creation within capitalism. It can therefore also subsume the striking insights from the first great work of philosophical historiography on the politics and psychology of a fully bourgeois or democratic society--Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville noted how bourgeois society is based on a perpetual fostering of people's desires for possessions. These desires are greater and more widespread, but more often disappointed, than in earlier, less materially ambitious societies. Most citizens desire prompt and easy consummation, which means that they would rather satisfy their goals incompletely but immediately than not at all. As distinct from feudal times, enrichment is now based on selling *cheaply to all* rather than *dearly to a few*. The general rule of workmanship for commodities is therefore « to manufacture a larger quantity of goods, nearly similar, but of less value. » However, this is necessarily accompanied by efforts to give such mass-produced commodities an appearance of possessing the « attractive qualities » they do not possess: the particular « democratic » variant of hypocrisy is--to adapt Tocqueville--the « hypocrisy of quality » (T50-55).

My conclusion from such first orientations is that in any discourse adjusted to the exchange-value and the market, novelty

<sup>3</sup> See by Benjamin in English also Charles Baudelaire (London, 1973), which includes fragments not yet published in the German edition of note 1--this one on p. 172. Cf. about this hypothesis also Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Warenform und Denkform* (Frankfurt, 1971), Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton, 1971), and some caveats in Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, 1977).



grows recurrent in both senses of this word : it becomes necessarily frequent, a conscious goal of discursive production, but also necessarily divorced from a radical--i.e., a consistent--novum. Instead of cumulative cognition, the pursuit of inner cognitive truth (determined both by the inner discursive, e.g. narrative, logic and by its referential richness), what Baudelaire called « the venal muse » is wedded to quantic shocks of seasonal fashion : « Fashion is the eternal return of the new » (B I/2 :677). Or : « The fashions of meaning changed almost as fast as the price of commodities. In fact, the meaning of commodity is called 'price' : it has no other meaning, as commodity. » <sup>4</sup> In his science-fictional and satirical look backward from the future *Mellonta Tauta*, Poe notes that. « [The ancient Amriccans worshipped] two idols that went by the name of Wealth and Fashion » (« Mellonta Tauta »). What will in our days come to be called the « culture industry » or « consciousness industry » concerns itself mainly with the maximal diffusion of the texts' mechanical reproductions. To that end, it needs quickly revolving, paradoxically transitory novelties that catch the eye but do not threaten the framework of revolving, the politico-economic presuppositions of market circulation. Change for its own sake grows into an article of ideological faith; but this is a quantitative, ephemeral, quickly appearing and disappearing (i.e., circulating) change which denies and even preempts any radically deep or central--and therefore relatively stable-novum.

Thus, the possibility of inner-directed otherness, what might be called the « it ain't necessarily so » principle is systematically counteracted and reified. Among other matters, this means that the intrinsically utopian, liberating aspects of any cognitive discourse (e.g. of a significant work of art)--its fullness of meaning, its necessary and sufficient structuring of parts into a whole without power-hierarchies, its denial that what exists in the writer's here and now is the sole possibility, its uniqueness, its historical depth and vitality--are attacked at their very root. The inalienable utopianism of cognition (e.g. of fiction) will increasingly be inscribed into it as concave into convex--i.e., inscribed by the even formally

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin, cited by Rolf Tiedemann in his « Nachwort » to Benjamin's *Charles Baudelaire* (Frankfurt, 1974), 204; see also Sánchez Vázquez and H.H. Holz, *Vom Kunstwerk zur Ware* (Neuwied, 1972).

noticeable, narratively illogical absence of the utopian aspects or spread of dystopia : either a noble death or misery.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Press and Sex : A Homology

Exemplary for and institutionally central to this whole process is in verbal discourse the rise of that specifically bourgeois and capitalist addition to it--the press. (Today, we would have to add the electr[on]ic media : radio, movies, TV, video-cassettes.) The mass-circulation newspapers were financially based on the innovation of carrying advertisements, the key to low price and a large readership. In them, the « brief and abrupt information began to compete with the staid report, » leading to the day-by-day changing look of the journal (B I/2 :528-29). Since the ads are to be read by the largest possible number of people, the newspaper must adopt two not quite compatible strategies. First, it must cover as many leading fields of interest as possible : « it is to become everyman's private library and encyclopaedia » <sup>6</sup> --or at least a substitute for informations and attitudes that used to be drawn from the libraries of the privileged and the literate as well as for the folk knowledge and ethos that used to be taken from oral discourse and communal tradition. Second, this encyclopaedia must conciliate conservatism turned toward the readers' common denominator with up-to-dateness about the latest fashions of circulation. Therefore, « a 'hook' or bait became necessary which was addressed to all regardless of their private opinion, and whose value lay in its putting curiosity in place of politics » (Nettement, cited in B I/2 :531). Thus was born the serialized novel in the feuilleton (later replaced by the sports and comics pages), and that is why astronomical prices began to be paid for such roman-feuilletons to Dumas père or Sue. As a result, both by formal example and by direct institutional (financial) ordering, the newspaper came to occupy the power position of the trend-setting literary commodity, the one that shapes

<sup>5</sup> See Christian Enzensberger, *Literatur und Interesse* (München, 1977), I :117-37, who follows some leads by Marcuse and--I suspect--by Benjamin; and Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Frankfurt, 1959), commented upon by Jameson, *Marxism....* For the parallel between commodity production and fashion, Benjamin is obviously updating Georg Simmel, « Die Mode, » in his *Philosophische Kultur* (Leipzig, 1919), 25-57; cf. in particular 28-30, 33, 36-39, and 51-2.

<sup>6</sup> Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, Vol. 4 (New York, s.a.), 16.

the structure of feeling for all other written discourse. To isolate here only the formal example, « The principles of journalistic information [are] novelty, brevity, intelligibility, and, above all, lack of coherence [Zusammenhangslosigkeit--non-consistency, disjointedness] between the individual news-items... » (B1/2 :610). Welcoming « the journalism of the age, » Edgar Allan Poe saw in it « a sign of the times--an indication of an era in which men are forced upon the curt, the condensed, the well-digested.... » In somewhat different but complementary (less commercial and more conceptually ideological) ways, what applied first of all to mass dailies applied also to the growing importance of the prestigious new periodicals. Poe expressly noted also that they, especially the faster monthlies, were in keeping « with the rush of the age. We now demand the light artillery of the intellect; we need the curt, the condensed, the pointed, the readily diffused--in place of the verbose, the detailed, the voluminous, the inaccessible.... »<sup>7</sup>

Benjamin held that the production of commodities is in capitalism homologous to fashion because of the latter's abstractness and self-referentiality, because of its monomaniac reproduction of itself in variations that amount to an infinite repetition and that are equally indifferent toward use-value. However, it might be necessary to update Benjamin : the fashion which (as different from pre-capitalist times) can be defined as « the exclusive domination which some product enjoys on the market-place for a certain period of time, »<sup>8</sup> is not so much homologous to as subsumed by commodity circulation. A true homology seems instead to exist in the quite curious and, I hope, illuminating parallels between the formal model of the press and the restructuring of erotics contemporary to it. I shall not enter here into the organizational regrouping of prostitution passing (in different countries with different speed) from « the oldest profession » as craft or at best cottage-industry to more centralized « red-light districts » and industrialized forms which were to culminate in the « large series » or conveyor-belt practices in keeping « with the rush of the age, » perhaps best shown in Brecht's *Rise and Fall of the City of*

<sup>7</sup> *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe in 8 Volumes* (Philadelphia, 1906), 6 :218 and 98-99.

<sup>8</sup> H.G. Schauer, cited by Jan Mukarovsky, *Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value as Social Facts* (Ann Arbor, 197) 41, who also refers to Werner Sombart's study of the economic aspect of fashions *Wirtschaft und Mode*.

*Mahagonny*. No doubt, in erotics too exchange-value grows dominant, with increased circulation at lower prices becoming the central profit-source in comparison to top courtezans. However, I shall limit myself to a formal or generalized anthropological setting up of discursive and semiotic parallels.

For, the increased rate of circulation leads also to two other, correlative but analytically distinguishable aspects. First, to an alienation, perversion, and diminution of use-value erotics into sentimental--either vacuous or platonic-- « pure love » and sensation-oriented « prostitution. » Both horns of this dilemma are characterized by the divorce of sex from sentiment, both are dominated by exchange-value--the latter openly, the former covertly. The classic fictional account of the covert exchange of love for possessions is perhaps Lear's abdication scene, and of the split as such Flaubert's *Education sentimentale* : both are most painful texts. Second, such isolatable sex is readily, so to speak, deterritorialized away from both marriage and other nonfinancial or use-value erotic relationships. The « brief and abrupt » sexual encounters, which « began to compete » with the lasting liaison are homologous to the model of new journalism. They have their final, psychological and not only economical, horizon in the « curt, condensed, well-digested,...pointed » male encounters with prostitutes. Not with one (as it were) favourite and constant prostitute : this would lack Benjamin's « novelty, brevity, intelligibility, and, above all, discontinuity. » The male-dominated societal discourse begins polarizing women between mothers (whose progenerative function is in traditional patriarchally religious fashion split from sexual love) and whores (whose sexual activity is split from both sentiment and progeny). It is unnecessary to attempt a list of female narrative agents of the 19th-century fictional discourse or indeed art in general, since it will be readily conceded that their overwhelming majority divides into the three types of mother, sentimental beloved, and prostitute. One only has to add asexual types such as the child-virgin and the crone, the highly significant fossile or recessive remnant of the unsatisfied, frustrated woman whose basic variants are the spinster and the romantic (Mme Bovary), as well as the mythologized bourgeois types of passive « angel » and aggressive « demon » (from Scott on usually the blond vs. the blackhaired woman). I would propose that all other female agents are a contamination of these half a dozen types. The ideal bourgeois woman is, logically, a paradoxical combination of caring mother, romantic (psychically virginal) angel-lover, and



aggressive sexual athlete (not to say prostitute). The opus of Balzac would probably show most of my postulated type-combinations.<sup>9</sup> For the moment I want to note how homologous this is to the newspaper's function of conciliating a conservatism appealing to the common denominator of the consumers (the same ones who were also consumers of sex and literature about erotics) with being up to the latest fashions of erotic novelty: the fake novum of up-to-dateness consists of recycling with minor changes the same old half-a-dozen types.

Since both are subsumed under commodity circulation, the marketing of erotic signs and bodies and the conditions of discursive production are also homologous. A writer-entrepreneur like Dumas père kept a whole slew of poor hacks to work for him (perhaps in his cellar): he behaved like an industrialist who supplies raw materials turned into finished commodities by hired « hands » (here pens or brains). The reigning, extremely productive dramatist, Scribe, had not only a number of acknowledged co-authors but also a number of « niggers » (wage slaves) who wrote dialogues for the plays he plotted. If the co-authors were something like wives or at least official concubines, the piecemeal hired pens were homologous to piecemeal hiring of sex. A parallel to such amalgamation of wage-slavery and true slaveowning is in erotics the fascinated interest of male audiences in harem-fantasies (e.g. in painting) of often quite reified sexual possessions, perhaps culminating in our time in the ironic scene of little Guido in Fellini's *8 1/2*. It is not that precapitalist (say feudal) patriarchs such as Barbe-bleue or Henry VIII did not « consume » many women: but at any particular point, their cruelty dealt with one woman, it was « quality-oriented » rather than, as in Sade, quantity-oriented. It was only with the rise of the great mercantile cities—the London described by Dekker, Jonson, or Defoe, the Paris of Restif, the Soochow of *Jin Ping Mei* (*Golden Lotus*)—that acquisitive quantification significantly inflected erotics. And I believe it was only toward the middle of the 19th century that such economic relationships took their place at the psychological center of both literature and erotics, inducing the coexistence of two simultaneous but increasingly incompatible societal evaluations for each. There is the « good » literature and/or

<sup>9</sup> I have contributed some spadework to the analysis of female roles in 19th-century science-fiction texts, in particular Bulwer's *Coming Race*, in my *Victorian Science Fiction* (see note 1).

love, supposedly of lasting or even eternal value; and then there is the « bestselling » one (supposedly revealing the underlying tastes of the day). This meant collapsing into the domain of one single social market and « taste, » which was in the process of being homogenized largely from above, the former clearly different circuits of discourse and evaluation borne by the various societal classes. E.g., nobody in the Middle Ages would have either denied or seen a problem in the evident fact that peasants and courtiers have different criteria for their very different narratives, songs, etc. The homology to erotics is again striking: only in developed capitalism, the same male bourgeois would as a rule have circulated between wife, amante attirée, and prostitutes with equal ease and more or less indifferently. The medieval peasants would have had to stick to Spring matings in the fields and/or wives, and the feudals to open courtois adulteries. Their erotic domains were kept in a true apartheid: only bourgeois fantasy, e.g. Hugo's *Ruy Blas* brought them together.

It is, thus, only in developed capitalism that relations of economic circulation began to attain hegemony, and added the overwhelmingly intense pressure of direct financial carrot-and-stick to the extensive, diffuse exemplarity of new life-styles. It is then that writers divided not only along economic but also along ideological lines, in American terms into the « lowbrow » and the « highbrow, » at roughly the same time that the women (were) divided into the consumable and the untouchable, the « dishonest » and the « honest ». For those integrated into the consumption, literary as well as sexual production develops into an industry or trade. On the contrary, many among the most significant writers retreated into a profound hatred of the bourgeoisie: Baudelaire began referring to literature as « column-fodder » and to writers as prostitutes. We can only speculate what the millions of mute, inglorious women felt; in the opinion of the most sympathetic writers (Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert, Chekhov, etc.) they seem to have had a similar hatred from the opposite side of the asymmetric social divide. Tocqueville formulated this with urbane lapidarity for literature, but *mutatis mutandis* one can readily apply the following also to erotics: « Democratic literatures are always infested by those writers who look upon letters as a mere trade and, for some few great authors you may see there, you may count thousands of idea sellers » (*T* 64). Baudelaire's very similar line, « Moi qui vends ma pensée et qui veut être auteur » (« I, who sell my thought and who want to be an author »), palpably modulates from the theological



connotations of « author » to the dominant market or indeed meretricious connotations; this process is shown in syntactic and syntagmatic reverse--the overwhelming empirical present precluding the supreme value and heart's desire--to produce the peculiar black, « damned » or dystopian effect alluded to earlier.

In sum, the mutually inducing and cumulative effect of such a press style and press power amounted to the introduction of bourgeois and capitalist industrial revolution into literary discourse and the institution as such : « the whole output of literature changes its character ». <sup>10</sup> The same bourgeois quantification and capitalist commodification is to be felt, with all due differences, in erotics. However, I do not wish to end without saying that, as against monotheistic cries for purity and the hypocrisy of gentlemanly monogamy, this irruption of epic crudity was potentially--and in some ways even actually--liberating. What was wrong about it (just as with press-style literature) was not the enlarging and democratization of sexual choice or erotic polymorphism but the containment and preemption of radical and lasting novelty in human relationships by fake and transitory novelty (in literature first analyzed à propos a « prostitute with the heart of gold » in Marx's critique of Sue).

Fashion as « the exclusive domination which some product enjoys on the market-place » is prominent in commodified erotics too. In the usually dominant bourgeois prudery this is disguised under the visual signifier of looks (clothes, makeup, etc.), standing for the signified of sexual accessibility. The male-dominated bourgeois society develops circulation primarily in the domain of female looks. Fashions are as a rule structured around fairly primitive oppositions, such as Twiggy vs. Earth Mother, sexual athlete vs. virginal soul, to which in this more permissive century the new source of circulation « disguised vs. undisguised » has been added. They are not based on but at best superadded to, and at worst substituted for, the pertinent qualities of psychophysical erotics, friendliness, economic support, etc. (erotics has been so alienated for so long that this « etc. » is in my case also a confession of bafflement). Another aspect of the subsumption of fashion under commodities is the reifying denial of personality, especially

<sup>10</sup> Jules Champfleury, *Souvenirs et portraits* (Paris, 1872), 77, cited in Hauser, 15.

associated with masses and large cities : in proportion to its novelty, a dress (for example) dominates fashionable people to the point of making an assembly of them appear (strangely enough) dressed in uniforms--not in unique but in unified forms, as Zamiatin was to punningly remark of the frozen fashion in *We*. The lemming-like sexual behavior and depersonalization of sentimental codes by the waves that some of us can remember in the last, say, 30 years may not need further arguing. A privileged place is here taken by institutions and products at the meeting-point of press (or better, mechanical multiplication of texts), fashion, socialization of erotics, and nakedly unabashed profit-lust : the « women's press, » Hollywoodstyle sentimental movies, TV soap-operas. Circulation über alles : heu quantum mutata from the great type of amorosa (quite realistically, usually coming to a bad end)--Héloïse or Li Ching-zhao, Juliet or Helen, Yang Kuei-fei or Dido ! Finally, fashion must necessarily be exasperated into *sensationalism*--a series of greater « effects » or shocks. In another momentous paradox, very significant for a general sense of history or time, *progress becomes indissoluble from catastrophe* : « For men as they are today, there exists only one radical novelty--one that is always the same : death » (*B* 1/2 :668). To take an example from the leading and sensitive seismic apparatus of German individualist music, in the century dominated by Schopenhauer's theories and Wagner's practice centering around the Liebestod and right down to Richard Strauss, the greatest human value--in the Romantic system, the erotic relationship and couple--can be affirmed only in the final anti-utopia of death. Senta and the Flying Dutchman, or Tristan and Isolde, haunt not only music but also the whole 19th-century poetic or significant drama. Half of it, the death of the beautiful and beloved girl, was indeed put into place by Romantic poetry--Poe already theorized it as the supreme poetic effect. The full constellation reappears down to Ibsen's Rebecca and Rosmer or Chekhov's less melodramatic sisters, all three left with carefully juxtaposed variants of psychic solitude (spinsterdom, loveless marriage, killing of male partner). Tocqueville had perspicaciously noted that in citizens of democratic societies ignorance results from too much information : « The chief features of each picture are lost to them in a bewilderment of details » (*T* 233-34). This is most intimately and inalienably connected with the very nature of information in capitalism. An information which would be both universally accessible and durably valid (say, the existence of any firm and durable value--e.g., love) would have the greatest use-value (say,

a directive how to live) but no exchange-value at all. On the contrary, tomorrow's race winner, stock-market quotation or accessibility of a rich heiress (e.g. in James's *Washington Square*), valid only for a short duration, has the greatest possible exchange-value or profitability but no use-value at all. It is only by rapid obsolescence that information (contradicting its original and intrinsic purpose) can become a quantified, marketable commodity; investors are interested only in this rapidly obsolescent information.<sup>11</sup> In Tocqueville's terms, democratic equality produces equally strong tendencies toward thinking new thoughts and toward ceasing to think; it makes for a curiosity that is « at once insatiable and cheaply satisfied, » eager « to know many things quickly rather than to know anything well » (T 12 and 334). Temporally, use-value is durable and tends to the absolute, exchange-value is a series of points and tends to the insatiable instant satisfaction. All durable or significant cognition and indeed experience (art, science, love) is in that sense intrinsically non-capitalist, if not anti-capitalist. The only reconciliation between duration and the supreme instant, love and consumerism, is the ultimate consummation of death--the most intimately felt model of the Liebestod.

### 3. Cognition and Prostitution : Holy Commodity

Another key homology to fiction as commodity--and in fact the model attitude for the new type of experience not immersed into use-value continuities (Erfahrungen) but composed of point-like occurrences (Erlebnisse) based on empathizing into or feeling with the exchange-value or money-price of the sensually devalued things--is in Benjamin's view *gambling*. It is an activity that also begins each time anew, from zero, yet remains a permanent variation of the same (both on the gaming table and on the stock market). Financial speculation is most intimately connected with the changes in the general sense of time and death : one of the most revealing insights into the bourgeois structure of feeling is Benjamin Franklin's « time is money. » Obversely, time is also death : Benjamin finds in Baudelaire's exemplary poetic system that the opponent who always wins in life's gamble is the demonic seconds-hand on the clock. Time the Grim Reaper is now using the new quantifying, measuring precision instruments. In Balzac's equally exemplary narrative system, money is the *peau de chagrin* which measures both

<sup>11</sup> Cf. G. Ciccotti et al., *L'Araignée et le tisserand* (Paris, 1979), 112-14.

life and death. The symmetrical obverse to sensually devalued things are sentimentally devalued bodies in erotics. Prostitute sex is both temporally quantified into money and a permanent mechanical variation of the same, *das Immerwiedergleiche*; obversely, sentimental investments are each time an anxious gamble, most vulnerable to time and money.

Fashion, gambling, quick turnover of money and commodities, time-anxiety, literature infiltrated by press disjointedness, and finally the practices of both written discourse and erotics as commodities submitting to all their laws--all of these have a psychic common denominator in the new type of human experience. It is a *customer experience* of repeated shocks wedded to a sense of *excitement*. Tocqueville expatiated on how, in consequence of the all-pervasive domination of money (the universal equivalent of commodities) and the pursuit of riches, all passions are channelled toward the same goal, giving them a « family likeness » and making people's lives--in a further paradox--simultaneously much more agitated and much more monotonous : « [As] the same successes and the same failures are continually recurring, the name of the actors only is changed, the play is the same » (T 238-39). In this situation, only permanently renewed excitement guarantees the restless consumers' interest. « [Sue's] first, and in fact his sole object, is to make an exciting, and therefore saleable book, » remarked Poe acutely (because enviously) of the supposedly radical *Mysteries of Paris*, the first and immensely influential example of the newspaper novel or column-fodder.<sup>12</sup> The art « of the present-day bourgeoisie is economically determined by profit, sociologically...above all as an instrument of sensation » (B II/2 :764). Therefore, in the final analysis, the fashionable and fashion-like type of fictional novelty is oriented « rather [toward] its themes' saleability than [toward] their cognition » (B II/1 :383). Selling an « organic » and most intimate product or *pars pro toto* of one's own psychophysiological self by inducing in the customer a sense of climaxing excitement found a ready metaphor or indeed allegorical emblem in whoring.

If erotics is a cognitive practice, then--as we remember from the end of section 1--its possibility of inner-directed otherness too is systematically counteracted and reified. Its intrinsically utopian, liberating aspects--fullness of meaning, necessary and sufficient structuring of parts into a whole without power-hierarchies, its

<sup>12</sup> Poe 6 :145.



denial that what exists in the lover's here and now is the sole possibility, its uniqueness, its passional depth and vitality--are attacked at their very root. The inalienable utopianism of love too will increasingly be inscribed into it by the passionately intolerable absence of the utopian aspects or spread of dystopia : romantically, a noble death, realistically, protracted misery, Thoreau's widespread « lives of quiet desperation. » In a uniquely intricate union of signifier and signified, prostitutes became a favorite analog of journalist-littérateurs in self-critical fictional discourse at the latest since Balzac's *Lost Illusions*. From then and down to *Ulysses*' « give us this day our daily press » or to Brecht, the most significant fiction became--as Aristotle had suggested it could--once again a fully cognitive organon.

In literature, use-value is significant esthetic cognition, while exchange-value is to be understood as the narrative domination of infinitely recurring superficial strangenesses. In erotics, use-value is more difficult to formulate, but it seems to me best approached in the Hellenic and Renaissance terms of an education of feelings and senses--also a cognitive, tho' not necessarily conceptualized, pursuit. No doubt, exchange-value is the domination of infinitely recurring etiolated sentimentalities and/or epidermic contacts; in both cases, there is a « hypocrisy of quality » : like Coca Cola, exchange-value pretends to be the real thing. The practice of fully developed commodity economies is not only indifferent toward a cognition of overall relationships between people, poetic or erotic, it grows increasingly inimical to such understanding. In Benjamin's splendid pun, bourgeois practices « shackle the production of intelligence » or « shackle the productive capacity of the intelligentsia » (*B II/2 :693, die Produktion der Intelligenz in Fesseln legen*); one can substitute erotic(s) for both intelligence and productive/tion. If confirmation is necessary as far as production of cognition is concerned, compare the present copyright laws on technical multiplication, such as photocopying or computer linkups, as an obverse of the increasingly totalized dispossession of authors from the distribution process in favor of big monopolies and commercial bureaucracies. (A further comparison with both an economic scarcity of the means for and the political ban on private use of technical multiplication in the pseudo-socialist countries of the Warsaw Pact could show without great difficulty the absurdity of a bureaucracy not even based on fast circulation but on a stasis that must become overtly repressive. Clearly, capitalism cannot be abandoned without re-using its truly productive and democratic,

Jeffersonian or Saint-Justian, original aspects, purged of the corruption of profit and exchange-value. The same would hold for the production of erotics, stymied by ideology more than material circumstances in the North Atlantic Pact countries, by material circumstances and general atmosphere more than ideology in Warsaw Pact countries. However, this demands separate treatment.)

GALILEO :...You like fish ? I have fish. What stinks is not my fish, it's me. I'm selling out, you're the buyer. Oh, irresistible sight of a book, that hallowed commodity. The mouth waters, the curses are drowned. The great Babylonian whore, the murderous beast, the scarlet woman, opens her thighs, and everything is different !

This is a passage from *The Life of Galileo*, a play polarized between the seductivity of two absolute founding texts--the Bible and the *Discorsi*--and two manners of knowing/seeing as well as between earthly and spiritual food. True, its theme is a specific mode of cognition--natural science; the book manuscript being handed over is supposedly the foundation of modern quantified physics. Yet Brecht quite properly recognized no fundamental cleavage between the pragmatic « circulating » situation of scientific and artistic discourse under capitalism. Here we thus see brought together the main topoi of his friend Benjamin : the significant book, the market relationship, appetite, prostitution, as well as the vehement Biblical imagery suitable to a matter of salvation or perdition, to an authorial stance recalling the last quote from Marx in section 1. This allowed Brecht to form the acutely oxymoronic term of « sanctified commodity » (geheiligte Ware). With its help, we can proceed toward a conclusion that the traditionally sacred (Benjamin would say « auratic ») artistic-cum-scientific process of cognizing and explaining people's relationships to each other and the universe is now dominated by commodification. The logic of capitalist mass-production leads from the Sacred Book to the Bestselling Obsolescences. The same holds for the traditional aura of erotics, restructuring people's feelings toward each other (and I suspect to the universe). In this sea-change from one-sided and static certainties to the whirligig of circulation there is also a potential for genuine exhilaration. Yet in its present form, our lives at the center of this logical model are still left with the double bind, stuck in the cleft stick, of the unhappy aporia incarnated in those two holy commodities--eros and agapè; the emotionally integral love-relation and the cognitively significant book (or : essay ?).



## MASTERS ARE MASTERS

Jacques Proust

Rene Halber's work clearly shows the contradiction which appeared in the classical language—the national French—the language of literary works and the ever since the French Revolution. The latter is opposed to the former. It is different from it although not external to it. On the contrary it is an intrinsic part of it. Rene Halber goes forward the hypothesis that this master's work is one side of a more general ideology and therefore social contradiction. Under the circumstances of the general ideological battle which the French society underwent ever since the bourgeoisie imposed itself as the dominant class, the opposition between literature and literary language could emerge and at the same time obscure a genuine social contradiction. Halber's work was mainly interpreted in this way.

### 1.2. Text analysis

\* I translated this French text by Michel Proust.

R. Halber, *Le Français, Le Français, Le Français*, Paris, 1971, Les Éditions de la Sorbonne, 1971.

Le Français, Le Français, Le Français, Paris, 1971, Les Éditions de la Sorbonne, 1971.

## MASTERS ARE MASTERS \*

Jacques Proust

Renée Balibar's works clearly show the contradiction which opposes to the common language--the national French--the language of literary works and this ever since the French Revolution.<sup>1</sup> The latter is opposed to the former, it is different from it although not external to it. On the contrary it is an intrinsic part of it. Renée Balibar puts forward the hypothesis that this conflict is only one side of a more general ideological and therefore social contradiction. Under the circumstances of the general ideological battle with the French society underwent ever since the Bourgeoisie imposed itself as the dominating class, the opposition between common and literary language could express and at the same time obscure a genuine social conflict. Up to now Renée Balibar was mainly interested in the academic consequences of the starting hypothesis of her research. This explains why she chose the French Revolution as *Terminus a quo*. It is indeed the time when were instituted the main lines of the academic system in which we were formed and still work. Nevertheless the constellation which we agree to call literature appeared in the sky of ideology shortly before the French Revolution. In 1808, Barante had already said : <sup>2</sup> The Church

\* Translated from French by Hélène Baïssus

<sup>1</sup> R. Balibar, D. Laporte, *Le Français National. Politique et pratique de la langue nationale sous la Révolution*, Paris Hachette, 1974; *Les Français fictifs*, Paris Hachette, 1974.

<sup>2</sup> See R. Mortier, *Le Tableau littéraire de la France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Un épisode de la « guerre philosophique » à l'Académie Française sous l'Empire (1804-1810)*. Bruxelles, 1972.

having lost its absolute and longstanding ascendancy over peoples' minds, *literature* began to be considered as an *institution* in the 18th century. « Through lack of regular institution », says Barante, literature became one ». He also says : « As it had become impossible to deal openly with politics or to go into the interests and the rights of the nation—even referring to the past—aversion, disgust, and rancour kept on expressing themselves under the veil of literary controversy ».<sup>3</sup> By literary controversy Barante obviously means what we would nowadays call the conflict of ideas in literature. He does not, in the least, contemplate the linguistic aspect of the conflict.

If Rene Balibar's hypothesis proves right for the post-Revolution period and concerning the academic institution, there is no reason why it should be wrong when applied to the period just preceding the Revolution and concerning the institution which Barante calls « literature ».

The matter is to know whether, *within* the forming common language, the literary language—which is *then* the privileged instrument and the main vehicle<sup>4</sup> of this process of formation—is not *already* contradicting the whole which it supports and to which it belongs from a cultural point of view, in the same way as a social class is opposed to the nation, even and especially when it is the dominating class.

Under the Ancien Regime the lower classes hadn't got the right to speak and *literature* did not give it to them.<sup>5</sup> Not that it was

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in R. Mortier, *Le Tableau...* p. 56-57.

<sup>4</sup> Along with the juridical language, most probably, Etienne Balibar and Pierre Macherey, in their introduction to *Le Français National* suggest that there exists a tight connection between the setting up and the generalization of the bourgeois laws for personal freedom and equality, and the constitution of a common language « which could tendanciously be that of all the citizens ». This remains to be proved.

<sup>5</sup> This is a vast research field in which investigations have only just started. Here are a few points of reference : *Images du peuple au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (colloque d'Aix-en-Provence, 1969), Paris, Colin, 1973. See particularly the fourth section. « Le peuple dans la littérature et dans l'art »; Pierre Chartier, « Parole et mystification ». Essai d'interprétation des « Deux amis de Bourbonne », in *Recherches nouvelles sur quelques écrivains des lumières*, Genève, Droz, 1972, p. 203-271; J. Proust, « De Sylvain Maréchal à Maïakovski : contribution à l'étude du théâtre révolutionnaire », in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century French Literature* (mélanges Niklaus), Exeter, 1975, p. 215-224. Cf. also J. van Eerde, « The People in eighteenth-century tragedy from Oedipe to Guillaume Tell (1718-1766) », in *Studies on Voltaire and Eighteenth Century*, vol. XXVII, p. 1703-1713; R. Mortier, « Diderot et la notion de peuple, Europe, janvier-février 1963, p. 78-88 ; « Voltaire et le peuple » in *The Age of Enlightenment* (mélanges Besterman), St. Andrews, Oliver and Boyd, 1967, p. 137-151.

unaware of their existence : Classical dramatic literature is teeming with representations of the common people (servants, maids, peasants). But we know perfectly well that their language was not authentic.<sup>6</sup> This lack of reality is in fact only the literary sign of a marked difference : in a general manner the lower classes did not speak French. They clearly spoke a different language : Breton, Basque, one of the Occitan dialects (from Gascon to Provençal), a local form of French, a patois. The French language was used by the King and Court, by aristocracy or urban bourgeoisie. With distinctive features depending on their degree of cultural integration, the only people to speak French were those who were confronted with the « upper » circles in everyday life : servants, shopkeepers, well-off peasants. Very few among them spoke *solely* French. In a general manner school and especially Humanities were not meant for them.<sup>7</sup> By force of circumstances only a very slight fringe of the nation could be interested in the *literary institution* (in literature considered as an institution according to Barante). And therefore, the intralinguistic contradiction revealed by Renée Balibar for the post revolutionary period becomes inevitably less obvious.

It is nevertheless possible to bring it to light provided that you look for it in the right place. Not *in* literary works—their institutional

<sup>6</sup> It is a pity that Frédéric Deloffre did not push further his very interesting study which he presented in 1957 in the ninth issue of *Les Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises* under the following title « Burlesque et Paysannerie ». There exists a coded « popular » language in the classic theatre, and it will have to be deciphered sooner or later.

<sup>7</sup> Concerning this topic, see the recent study of W. Frijhoff and D. Julia, « Ecole et Société dans la France d'Ancien Régime », *Cahiers des Annales*, N°35, Paris, Colin, 1975, and in particular p. 87. « Bien loin de jouer dans le sens d'une ascension sociale généralisée, le collège favorise (...) le maintien du système établi, réparti en trois secteurs. Le salariat d'abord qui ne bénéficie d'aucune scolarisation au niveau secondaire. Une scolarisation différentielle pour les classes indépendantes inférieures, massivement maintenues dans leur condition, à moins que leurs membres, en entrant dans les ordres, ne se mettent en marge du système en guise de confort, mais sans pouvoir réel de reproduction sociale. Enfin une scolarisation large - voire, tout en haut, totale - de l'élite au pouvoir ». Cf. p. 92 : « L'exclusion de base, celle qui décide ou non de l'accès à l'enseignement secondaire, repose en fait sur la hiérarchie sociale existante. Et il faut rappeler que dans les catégories sociales inférieures, la petite cohorte d'enfants scolarisés provient essentiellement des catégories supérieures de l'artisanat ou de l'agriculture. Bien plus, du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XVII<sup>e</sup> (siècle), la fourchette s'est probablement rétrécie ».



task being to obscure the conflict and not to reveal it--but at the few points where the ideological framework of the text becomes sufficiently loose for the informed reader to distinguish its double aspect.<sup>8</sup>

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For several reasons I chose as field for my investigation the letter CVII from « *Les liaisons dangereuses* ». Firstly, after Baudelaire, Laclos' novel is the *pons asinorum* for a certain type of social criticism. (See how Madame de Tourvel's social status and the more or less revolutionary designs of artillery officer Laclos have been glossed). But this type of speculation neglects the fact that a text is first and foremost the result of specific processes rather than it reflects any social reality, if it however can. An author places himself in relation to the battles of his time through his personal practice and experience. The second reason for this choice and probably the most paradoxical stems from the fairly trivial nature of letter CVII. Azolan only plays a minor part in the romantic plot, and letter CVII is the only opportunity for him of writing. His letter does more than just pad out the book, it is in fact most useful to the plot at the time when it is presented.

But it distracts the reader's attention more than it sustains it. Nevertheless what is true inside the text isn't as far as intertext is concerned, and this is the third reason for my choice. Azolan's letter is indeed at its time *an expected piece of literature*. In *Les Liaisons* it is the reply to Fanchon Regard's letter in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. And moreover the author of *Les Liaisons* and the author of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* are replying to Richardson.<sup>9</sup> Richardson's novel

<sup>8</sup> The critical processes which have been adopted at this point of the analysis are similar, in their type to what I followed in the study of the plates of *l'Encyclopédie* « *L'image du peuple au travail dans les planches de l'Encyclopédie* », published in the reports of the symposium in Aix quoted in note 5. Literally, the plates don't mean anything as far as the actual practice of the workers is concerned, they only show work and work saving practices. But a critical eye, helped by macrophotography, is able to show in the picture's details or in its margins exactly what the artist saw and reproduced as though he hadn't realized. (For example the man and woman pulling a cart in the upper left corner of the plate on cork-makers).

<sup>9</sup> J.J. Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Paris, Gallimard, Pléiade, 1961, p. 119. The publisher notes very rightly (p. 1410) : « The main interest of this letter is in the research of a « peasant » or « popular » style. Rousseau is neither the first nor the only one to follow this track. The famous quarrel between Madame Dutoit and the cabman (in Marivaux's *Marianne*) just proves it. There is also the *Opéra Comique*, the *Fun Fair Theatre*, etc... » But he is mistaken when he aims his criticism at theatre. The only link between the author of *La Vie de Marianne* and Rousseau is of course Richardson.

*Clarissa Harlowe* was indeed for many an author of the second half of the 18th century an undisputed literary example, whether they read it in the original English version as Diderot did, or like everybody else in the French translation published by l'Abbé Prévost in 1751. From an intertextual point of view, Roux Azolan and Fanchon Regard are the son and daughter of Joseph Leman, Lovelace's « honest » servant.<sup>10</sup> This text considered alone or in the context of the whole book is of minor interest, whereas it stands out significantly when considered in the context of the romantic literature of its time. Here lies the paradox and to my idea the only existence of this paradox justifies a *symptomatic* reading of letter CVII.<sup>11</sup>

If Renée Balibar's hypothesis should be right, we have to prove that the plain and common French language that the ignorants supposedly spoke in the 18th century is literally *implied* in the structure of the text, i.e. that the text includes and integrates this language as well as it distorts and compromises it. In other words we have to prove how « two antagonistic unequal yet inseparable uses of the common language »--two differential practices of the same common French language--are brought into a conflict that the literary text aspires to settle artificially. The text does actually settle the conflict *but in a fiction*. In the process we must not forget that from this point of view « simple » and « literary » can not be characterized directly as such, they are not *stylistic* values in themselves. Together they build a dialectic pair in which each term is only valid and in fact only exists when compared with the other. We must not forget either that the matter is to describe and understand a scriptural procedure. From this point of view that Azolan be a servant and have a particular rank among the servants (footman) is not really relevant. Considering the great number of ranks and classes in the 18th century society it is difficult to say whether servants belong to the common people because they stem from them, or whether they evade it because they have come away from it. It only takes Azolan writing in the manner of an ordinary man, as expected *in a novel*, to notice this.

<sup>10</sup> This « filiation » has been proved a long time ago, but up to now, it has only been used to show the literary influence of one author on another, or the comparative psychology of several characters. Alone Laurent Versini thought about comparing styles (« Azolan is more civilized than Leman... »), in *Laclos et la tradition, essai sur les sources et la technique des « Liaisons dangereuses »*, Paris, Klincksieck, 1968, p. 313-314. We shall nevertheless show that it isn't sufficient to just compare styles, i.e. products : we have to compare the processes which produced them i.e., the scriptural practices.

As far as the prerevolutionary period is concerned the 18th century has left us with hardly any authentic documents enabling us to reconstitute the actual practice of those among the common people who had enough instruction to do more than sign their patronymic name. A few are to be found in the margin of Diderot's *Correspondance*. These are letters written by Madame Jodin, a friend of Madame Diderot, or by Madame Diderot herself. One was the widow of a clockmaker who had been left penniless. The other had been a linen maid before marrying the Philosopher.<sup>12</sup> It is quite normal that the publishers of *La Correspondance* set these documents in small italics. They generally resort to this device in order to distinguish the texts which Diderot did not write himself. More remarkable the fact that they both thought it necessary to use various manners to underline the practice of these two witnesses. Georges Roth translates certain expressions as though it were a foreign language, or uses *sic* for those he finds amusing.<sup>13</sup> Jean Varloot is more direct: he « standardizes » i.e. he corrects what he considers as being a distortion.<sup>14</sup> In such a case the point of view of the ethnographer equals the one of the schoolmaster: in both cases, the text is expelled from the sphere of *literature* in the name of spelling and grammatical norms that are so obvious that they need not be justified.

Renée Balibar would probably recognize here the basic characteristics which constitute her favorite field of investigations. But how about the 18th century literature? You would think it sufficient to compare with Azolan's or Fanchon Regard's letters

<sup>11</sup> I understand « symptomal » in the way Louis Althusser uses this word in *Lire Le Capital*. I (Paris, Maspero, 1970). The reading of a text is « symptomal » « when at the same time it reveals what is not revealed in the text itself and relates it to another text; this second text being present in the first precisely because it is necessarily absent » (Book quoted, p. 29).

<sup>12</sup> Two of these letters have been reproduced in J.P. Seguin's book *La Langue française au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, Bordas, 1972, p. 25, under the significant heading: « Quelques textes paralittéraires ». Indeed these texts are not literary (whereas Diderot's letters are of course considered as such). But Seguin is mistaken when he says that « these two ladies are not of modest condition ». All reference texts appear in the annexed documents.

<sup>13</sup> It is the case for the four letters reproduced in the annexed documents. In *Correspondance*, X, 83, he calls « cacographie » a letter written in a similar style by miss Jodin.

<sup>14</sup> For example, concerning a letter from Madame Diderot to her daughter. (*Correspondance*, XII, 18).

one of the annexed authentic documents in order to realize at once the difference between « common » and « literary ». Unfortunately it is not quite as easy. We chose Maurice Allem's edition as our investigation base.<sup>15</sup> It isn't the reproduction of the manuscript but the novel's original edition. And it isn't a scrupulous reproduction at that. « We contented ourselves with modernizing the spelling, says the publisher, but we maintained capital letters for all the substantives where they were used. This isn't indeed a difference in spelling. This arbitrary use of capital letters is just one of the author's extravagances, and this is the reason why we maintained it. On the other hand only names have capital letters in the manuscript. The first word of the sentence does not even have one. »<sup>16</sup>

In the Garnier edition of *Les Liaisons*<sup>17</sup> Yves Le Hir, on the contrary, refers to the manuscript 12845 from Bibliothèque Nationale as basic text. This version is not a draft but a handwritten fair copy. The publisher *contented* himself with modernizing the spelling and punctuation. Therefore Le Hir's text is not a more graphically accurate version of the author's text than Allem's.

Fortunately Yves Le Hir thought of giving us a fairly systematic description of Laclos's<sup>18</sup> spelling practice. Thus we are able to imagine the approximative physiognomy of these few pages, beyond our reference text and providing we are used to manuscripts of that time.<sup>19</sup>

Considering these important corrections the comparison of document n°1 with document n°2 brings to light noticeable

<sup>15</sup> Described in the bibliography, p. 750-752, of the reference edition (Paris, Gallimard, Pléiade, 1951).

<sup>16</sup> *Liaisons* Pléiade, p. 22-23. Here the point is not to start a debate on the principles of this modernization, but the least we can say is that they are not all convincing.

<sup>17</sup> Paris, 1962.

<sup>18</sup> *Liaisons*, Garnier, p. XIX-XX.

<sup>19</sup> People will ask me why I didn't resort to the manuscript itself. It is just that Le Hir's and Allem's editions are in my mind *perfect examples*. Just as Georges Roth's and Jean Varloot's annotations in *Correspondance* de Diderot, they prove that the French academic system, supported by the big publishers, refuses *on principle* the testimony of « abnormal phenomena ». More than likely because this would cast discredit on the norm itself and on the legitimacy of its reproduction... I kept the text of Allem's edition because it represents a modern and academic practice which follows exactly the literary practice of the 18th century, even if it seems to be contradicting it. We shall take a closer look at this a bit later.



differences. As far as Yves le Hir's description allows us to restore it, Laclos'/Azolan's spelling is neither capricious nor extravagant, even though it isn't systematic. On a certain number of points it isn't fixed, although in accordance with the practice of most great authors and most printing houses of the 18th century. However, in the handwritten manuscript as well as in any of the printed versions, whether modernized or not, *Azolan writes in the same manner as his master*. On the other hand, both Madame Jodin and Madame Diderot have a totally anarchic spelling with three characteristics of unequal importance :

-The spoken chain is cut into elements which don't necessarily correspond to words. They are longer or shorter and their limits seems to be arbitrarily set (« en natandan », « mon nartement », « tu napabesoins », « sais touseque », « les pesrance » « les 2 sanfran », « qui les osreresu », « qui me laisa porterais », « j'ai spaire », « mai crire avantons de par ») ;

-Some expressions are written phonetically (« du marte », « une plice ») ;

-In some others, plain sounds are transcribed with excess letters : « dessir » (désir); « bessez » (baiser).

The first two characteristics refer to an essentially oral practice of the language. Madame Jodin and Madame Diderot literally write just as they speak. They are probably not used to reading. Nevertheless they aren't « straightforward » enough to write *just exactly* as they speak. They probably have the vague impression that it is not done. Hence they should be tempted to add the odd extra letter here or there. In fact they are totally unaware of the relationship between some phonemes and their graphic transcription. Madame Jodin writes *gois* instead of *joie*, and *forgolis* instead of *fort joli*. Moreover the use they make of punctuation and capital letters is no more and no less free than that of Laclos (or Azolan), Voltaire, Diderot, or Théophile de Bordeu, at least as far as their current correspondance is concerned. In brief let's say that they make an « expressive » use of them. This is probably quite true for punctuation but more doubtful for capital letters. Indeed the letters D, M, S, C, seem to exercise a strong attraction over the 18th century writers. This seems solely due to these letters' shapes and appears in handwritten and in typographic form.

From a grammatical point of view another two features are typical of the letters reproduced in the document n°2.

Firstly the verbal morphology would nowadays be considered as incorrect (« je luis a fait dire », « j'ai ettés chez Mr roger »). Secondly the syntax is still in its infancy, and gets confused in subordinate clauses (« je n'ai que toi dans l'esprit parceque tu m'écriras et que tu m'enverras quelque chose de tes bienfaits adresse à M. Diderot »). Lastly we shall note the « plain » or « clumsy » turns of phrases (according to the better circles) such as « ton affectionnée mère Jodin », « femme Diderot », « la Frédérique ». Although Laclos seems to have wanted to give to Azolan a conventional truthfulness he was very careful not to attribute to him the spelling of common people. The servant's spelling is that of other characters in the novel, that of Laclos himself. On the other hand his verbal forms are sometimes like those of Mme Diderot or of « Mother Jodin ». He writes : « j'ai été chez M. Bertrand », « j'ai été chez Mme la Présidente », « elle a été avant neuf heures aux Feuillants ». He also knows how to write : « Mme la Présidente est allée l'après-midi dans la bibliothèque ». *His syntax is never confused*. It is just a little « heavy » from time to time, as would say any schoolmaster : « mais pourquoi donc est-ce qu'elle s'en est allée comme ça », « quant à ce que monsieur me reproche d'être souvent sans argent », « pour ce qui est d'entrer au service de Mme de Tourvel », « pour tout ce qui est du reste ». Lastly we can hardly consider his letter ending as being clumsy : « son très humble serviteur, Roux Azolan, chasseur ».

Nevertheless Azolan's letter includes some features of plainness with no equivalent in the compared document : « il n'avait pas d'ordre de ça de vous », « il m'a paru que ça devait être la plus intéressante », « je parierais *bien* que ce sont celles de Monsieur », « je suis *bien* sûr que c'est encore une de Monsieur », « j'écris bien comme il y a », « Monsieur saura *bien* tout », « elle a déjeuné *et puis* s'est mise à écrire », « par amitié pour moi *et puis* aussi pour Monsieur ». The same features of plainness (ça, bien, et puis)<sup>20</sup> often appear in Cecile's letters and she is still a child.

<sup>20</sup> Laurent Versini's description of Azolan's style coincides in several points with the one I am giving here. But as he judges in the absolute and not in a comparative way, he keeps some features which to me don't seem relevant (alternatively third and second person speech) or he classifies as « bad » what I consider as « good » (« sentences which ignore all about subordination, and in which only « et » appears as coordination, when they are not plainly juxtaposed and separated by a semicolon »).



This first comparative study brings to light two conflicting phenomena. Laclos writing in the name of Azolan only keeps two features from the genuine practice of a really uneducated writer. He resorts to certain verbal forms which are well attested by the common use (and then this isn't systematic) and he resorts to a heavy syntax. He refuses the anarchic spelling which is typical of oral expression. He also refuses the unsettled syntax for it generates intellectual confusion. In return he scatters through his text features of plainness which are not especially typical of the common people considering that they are to be found in Cecile's letters, and she belongs to a privileged class. But Cecile is uneducated, she is still a child. For the 18th century political social mind the moral and intellectual vegetative state of the common people is identified to childhood. In the same way as savages, the common people live in permanent infancy. From this generally accepted idea follows the literary commonplace which consists in making the people talk like children.

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The study of the variants of the handwritten manuscript is of hardly any consequence considering that it isn't a rough draft but a faircopy. It nevertheless enables us to distinguish a tendency which we must now bring to light. About the corrections in Allem's edition Yves Le Hir says : « They make it possible to follow a scrupulous stylist in search of a precise, strong text which would enhance the idea thanks to a deciding word or turn of phrase. One trait is enough for Laclos to tone a thought up or down. He is in search of light diction, of expressions which attract the reader's attention on the realities and representations that he displays. In brief, he neglects none of the small ingenuities that authenticate the psychological analysis which he wanted to be of classical distinction.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless if Laclos' working of the style was always on the look out for maximum truthfulness, we should expect that letter CVII neglects not the small ingenuities proving Azolan's belonging to domesticity. There are certainly several types of servants, and Laurent Versini clearly indicated, within the limits of a psychologically versed criticism, that Azolan just could not be a

<sup>21</sup> *Liaisons*, Garnier, p. XXI.

servant like any other. Valmont and Azolan act in collusion with each other, says Versini, and this explains certain familiarities from the servant. He also says : « This servant who refuses to wait on a Lady President is the valet of a skilled master, and *this shows*. He knows his circle, and the fashionable jargon rubs off on him.»<sup>22</sup> This effect is certainly due to Laclos' fine art, but it isn't sufficient to just describe it, we have to find its *origin*.

The dynamic tension which the first analysis brought to light appears in the deletions and alterations of the manuscript. Most of the twenty four corrections listed by Allem are purely stylistic.

Correction N° 2 : « retour » (return) appears instead of « départ » (departure) because this word is used two lines further.

Correction N° 5 : « Capuchon » is less specific and therefore more easy to understand than « capot » or even « calèche », which could be ambiguous (« Pendant tout ce voyage Madame a eu sa calèche sur sa figure »). We can therefore say that Laclos was in search of a precise text and a light diction.

Corrections N° 4, 6, 11, 17, 23, 24 must nevertheless be treated separately.

Correction N° 4 : « Madame de Tourvel a eu » → « Madame a eu ». Laurent Versini considers that this plain « Madame » is a servant's expression. In fact, as in N° 5, it is to avoid a repetition, « Madame de Tourvel » being written in full at the beginning of the previous paragraph.

Correction N° 6 : « qui n'a pas déjeuné » → « qui n'avait pas déjeuné ». This correction is respectful of the sequence of tenses, which the first version ignored.

Correction N° 11 : « Un moment après Madame » → « Un moment après elle a été » → « Madame la Présidente est allée l'après-midi ». In this case the word « Madame » repeated at the beginning of the three consecutive paragraphs would have been too indicative of domesticity. « Elle » would have been purely familiar. « Elle a été » would have been in conformity with the common practice of the first set of documents. This would not have disfigured the letter for it is to be found another twice. The verb has nevertheless been corrected at the expense of a repetition. (A few lines before we have. « Mais pourquoi donc est-ce qu'elle s'en est allée comme ça ? »).

Correction N° 17 : « Il y en avait bien une aussi » → « Il y en avait une aussi ». This conventional feature of common-childish

<sup>22</sup> L. Versini, quoted book, p. 313.

language is well known. Laclos resorts to it several times in letter CVII. *Here nevertheless he crosses it out.*

Correction N° 23 : « quoique en restant » → « en restant (au service) de Monsieur ». In a sentence where the syntax was not particularly light (« Pour ce qui est d'entrer au service de Madame de Tourvel... ») the pleonastic use of « quoique » made it even more heavy. *Laclos crosses it out.*

Correction N° 24 : « de respect que de considération votre très humble serviteur » → « de respect que d'affection, son très humble serviteur ». Laurent Versini underlines the relevance of this double correction. « Affection » is a better expression of the complicity between Valmont and Azolan, although epistolary handbooks consider it a mistake when an inferior writes to his superior. On the other hand « son », the correction of « votre », is respectful of grammar.

On the whole it is clear that Laclos' ultimate corrections in his fair copy show his obvious concern about elegance (i.e. the suppression of repetitions and heavy turns of phrases.). They tend towards reaching a greater *grammatical* perfection. This is a paradox which the psychologically versed criticism wasn't sufficiently aware of. Concern about grammatical perfection contradicts what this criticism usually thinks of true and likely things, and Laurent Versini's emendation to this representation is ingenuous rather than convincing (according to which Valmont's stylistic merits revert to Azolan.). In fact, this is not really the point, the matter being more a question of intertextuality. Laurent Versini had sensed it. He noticed that Laclos *had gone further* than Richardson and Rousseau by adding to the servant's features those of a steward and confessor, and he writes : « Azolan is more civilized than Leman (...). Laclos does not allow him the spelling mistakes that Richardson reproduced ». This is indeed the important matter, but just noting it is not enough. It is as though a repressive authority - i.e. Laclos' grammatical awareness - were constantly checking on the text attributed to Azolan, as though putting the servant's words under supervision finally prevailed on the concern about respecting likelihood. Therefore the paradoxical tension between what is repressed and the will to repress seems accordingly stronger. What is natural and plain in Azolan's fictive practice shows all the better since this plainness is repressed and displayed at the same time by the author's literary likings.

In what way is Laclos' scriptuary practice different from that of Richardson ?<sup>23</sup>

This question means more than just reconsidering the problem of influences. Richardson's influence on Rousseau, and Rousseau's and Richardson's influence on Laclos is a well known matter. The great widespread editions and the critics published in these last few years make the question sufficiently clear.<sup>24</sup>

Nobody though seems to have wondered *which* Richardson was implied... There was a great difference in 1762 and in 1782 between the possible reading of « Clarissa » in *English* and in *French*. As early as 1761, Diderot wrote in his « *Eloge de Richardson* » : « You who have read the works of Richardson in your elegant French translation, you are quite mistaken ».<sup>25</sup>

This elegant translation was given to the public by Prévost ten years before that. Diderot's remarks pushed l'Abbé Prévost to resume it and add to it the « *Lettres Posthumes* » and the « *Testament de Clarisse* », of which Diderot deplored the absence in the 1751 edition. But l'Abbé Prévost did not rewrite the translation itself, and basically reproduced it from one edition to the next.<sup>26</sup> Funnily enough this translation is left aside by all the

<sup>23</sup> No wonder if the *cultivated reader* guesses the name of Richardson in the text's framework itself (Letter CVII.). When Azolan goes and visits Madame de Tourvel's library he notices two empty spaces on the shelves : « There is room for two books only : one is the second volume of *Les Pensées Chrétienues* ; and the other is the first volume of a book called *Clarissa* ». In the first place, Laclos had written « *Clarissa Harlowe* » but this was probably too much when written by an uncultured character, even if he is used to the society of *petits-maitres*. « Monsieur » only must know « what it is »... If there should exist any complicity, any connivance, it isn't between Azolan and Valmont, who are fictive characters, but between the author and his reader in a dated sociocultural context.

<sup>24</sup> There is a fair statement concerning this question in René Pomeau's short book *Laclos*, Paris, Hatier, 1975 (chap. 5 « Le dessein de Laclos »).

<sup>25</sup> Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes* (Assézat et Tourneux); Paris, Garnier. 1875, T.V p. 218.

<sup>26</sup> There is a study on Prévost translating Richardson. It was written by F. H. Wilcox and its title is : « Prévost's translations of Richardson's novels ». It was published in *Modern Philology* (University of California) 1925/1926, 12, p. 341-411. It is purely descriptive. On the point we are interested in Wilcox only says (concerning the servant's language) : « The letter of Mr. Solmes to Clarissa is written in the coarsest and most incorrect language; Prévost has reproduced it with corresponding faults in French (...). In other cases, however, the language which is appropriate to boors and valets is altered to bring within the bounds of French decorum. The valet must talk as correctly as his master, although he may talk more simply. He is not expected to express such noble sentiments nor such profound reflections as his master's, but he must not sin any more than his master against the law which forbade anything not... « noble » (p. 364). He says about Leman's letters : « Prévost has hardly made the style of Leman as correct and as elegant as that of Lovelace, but he has removed from it most of the marks of its origin. The flavor of it is gone with the vulgarity » (p. 365).



critics who studied Richardson's influence on Laclos. They pretend it doesn't exist or that its existence is indifferent. Why? Because they consider the question of influence in terms of representation, because they are interested in subjects, topics, a sensitivity, psychology, and what have you, but not in the relevant signs which allow to distinguish the *practice* of one author from that of another.

In the particular case of Leman's letters, Prévost gave us a precious piece of information. Footnote N°1 of Letter XCIII (Document N°3) reads: « Wanting to preserve the characters, the author pushes the accuracy to reproducing this letter with the linguistic and spelling mistakes commonly found in Leman's station. But our nation has no liking for such gross descriptions and we shall content ourselves with keeping the style and features of plainness which allow to recognize a servant.<sup>27</sup> »

Things are quite clear as far as Prévost is concerned: to talk about *style* and *language* is equivalent to talking about *social station*.

Social stations have to be depicted in a recognizable manner but concern about decency and the nation's likings -what Renée Balibar would call the prevailing ideology- do not allow the lower classes' discourse to be reproduced as such. « Plainness » may-be, -and this word obviously has a meaning only in the literary convention- not crudeness.

And we therefore understand how the genuine working of texts has been obscured for a long time by the realistic illusion, the component of any positivist criticism, even of marxist leanings. Attention was only paid to plainness; people went in ecstasies over likelihood. (One question though: Which features of plainness allow us to recognize the servant in Azolan's letter?). The fact that in intertextual space-time the practice of the French author (either Prévost or Laclos) consists of repressing and reducing more than anything else has been left aside.

Are the letters reproduced by Richardson in the original English version the very model of authenticity as opposed to Prévost translation or Laclos' imitation? Nobody can be positive about it. We sometimes have the impression that the English author respects conventions that are certainly the opposite of French classic taste but nevertheless remain literary conventions in their own

<sup>27</sup> Letter XCIII is to be found p. 396, volume I, new edition of *Clarissa Harlowe*, published by Boulé, Paris, 1846. It is the annexed document N°3. In Richardson the same letter bears N°XCVI, it is the annexed document N°4.

sociocultural context. The various forms of excess which are characteristic of the English Leman's style do, in a way, remind us of the ones which in France lead to the « poissard » style. At the beginning it was just a systematization of the code used in the theatre to mark the speech of common people. Whereas this code (in Molière's plays or in the Fun Fair theatre) was intended to make a literary difference of genuine linguistic practice, « poissard » became an authentic play on the code. It progressively obliterated any reference to observable practices and it cultivated the artifice for the sake of it.

There is unquestionably a search for the burlesque style in Richardson's version. This may be his own way of repressing and reducing. The text of Leman is too laden with acknowledgements of his plainness to be truly honest: « *so plane a man as I be* » is what is to be read in one of his letters; (document N°6) « *what invenshon should suche a plane man as I have* »; « *forgive the gesting of a poor plane man* »; « *we common fokes have our joys* »; « *Sarvants will show their joiful hartes, thoff but in partinens when encouredg'd* ». And in our document N°4: « *for I am, althoff a very plane man, and all that, a very honest one* »; « *I am a very plane man, and seldom have writ to such honourable gentleman* ». <sup>28</sup> The letters sent by Lovelace to Leman underline in a heavy ironical way the plain character of the honest Joseph: « *Of a plain man's head I have not known any better than yours* »; « *I love your jesting. Jestig better becomes a poor man than qualms. I love to have you jest.* » <sup>29</sup> When it comes down to it, the seemingly extreme familiarity of the correspondence between Lovelace and Leman could lead us to think that the master and the servant are separated by the same great distance as Valmont and Azolan (« *your assured friend* », « *your loving friend* » says Lovelace). (« You who left this morning, you must be a real imbecile not to know that Madame de Tourvel too was leaving », says Valmont.) This distance however is significant as far as linguistics are concerned. In Richardson's version it is as though the difference of stations, either toned down or sometimes obscured by a marked goodnaturedness of the interpersonal relationships, were on the other hand to be underlined in the use of oral or written language. It is in fact the opposite of what appears in *Les Liaisons* where the

<sup>28</sup> Volume II, 1962 edition, already quoted p. 143-146. It is the annexed document N°6.

<sup>29</sup> Volume II, p. 147-149, 1962 edition.



human relationships are all the more distant since the linguistic practices are close.

Prévost's work on Richardson's text is therefore not only a translation from one language into another. It is also a work of repression and reduction which concerns ideology. English and French people hold different views on relations between classes, or rather, they use different criteria to distinguish them. Hence the translator's confusion when confronted with a text like our document N°6. This Leman is a real nuisance, he tends to pour out his feelings a little too much. Therefore Prévost unhesitatingly summarizes part of his letter. In the summary as well as in the translation he deliberately changes the writing system, and reduces the writer to the grammatical condition of nonbeing: « He informs...He asks...He marks...He says that... ». More important yet the fact that Prévost keeps none of his model's features, neither his phonetic spelling nor his grammar. Thus he totally refuses the linguistic practice of the subject: his oral practice that an English ear would necessarily attribute to a particular geographical area, to a particular social class;<sup>30</sup> his written practice which is in fact the

<sup>30</sup> The contemporary reader will remember the use which is made of vernacular language in Mellor's mouth, the warden in *Lady Chatterley's lover*, 1928. There is here a constant in English literature. In order to stay within the 18th century we shall compare the letters of Leman in Richardson with this one which is to be found in *Tom Jones* (Everyman edition, Book 15, Ch. 11, p. 662-663):

« Sir, I shud sartenly haf kaled on you a cordin too mi prommiss haddunt itt bin that hur lashipp prevent mee: for too bee sur, sir, you nose very well that evere persun must luk furst at ome, and sartenly such anuther offar mite not ave ever hapned, so as I shud ave bin justly to blam, had I not excepted of it when hur laship was so veri kind as to offar to mak mee her one uman without mi ever askin any such thing, to bee sur shee is won of thee best ladis in thee world and pepil who sase to the kontrari must bee veri wiket pepil in thare harts. To be sur if ever I ave sad any thing of that kine it as bin thru ignorens and I am hartili sorri for it. I nose your onor to be a genteelman of more onur and onesty, if I ever said ani such thing, to repete it to hurt a pore servant that as always ad thee gratest respect in thee world for ure onour. To bee sur won shud kepe wons tung within one's teeth, for no boddi nose what may hapen; and to bee sur if ani boddi ad tolde mee yesterday, that I shud haf bin in so gud a plase to day, I shud not haf beleaved it; for too bee sur I never was a dremd of any such thing, nor shud I ever have soft after ani other bodi's plase; but as her laship wass so kine of her one a cord too give it mee without askin, to be sure Mrs. Etoff herself, nor no other bodi can blam mee for exceptin such a thing when it fals in mi waye. I beg ure onur not too menshon ani thing of what I haf sad, for I wish ure onur all thee gud luk in thee wurd; and I don't cusion butt thatt u wil haf Madame Sofia in the end; butt ass to miself ure onur nose I kant bee of ani farder sarvis to u in that matar, nou bein under thee cumand off anuther parson, and nott mi one mistress. I begg ure onur to say nothing of what past, and belive me to be, sir.

« Ure onur's umble sarvant  
« To cumand till deth,  
« Honour Blackmore. »

exact copy of his oral practice. *On the contrary*, Prévost seems to take pleasure in the moulding of his translation in the nicely turned sentences that were taught in French colleges at that time. His choice of indirect speech explains the phenomenon even if it does not justify it. Although a letter written by Leman is an amazing feat, it is reduced to very little by Prévost (document N°5). Only two idioms are reproduced in his translation: « son sang bouillait pour la vengeance »; « au milieu de l'orge et des fèves ».<sup>31</sup> And, even so, he had them set in italics, in order to dissociate them from the context. He also gave them an ordinary first degree spelling whereas in English, the first expression, at least, is a double stylistic device: it is a first degree figure in the young master's mouth, and a parody in the servant's mouth who says *harte* instead of *heart* etc... Document N°4 isn't as ill treated as N°6 because it is shorter. It is translated in the first person. But it also contains more idioms and it is quite surprising to see what becomes of them. The spelling and the grammar are indeed systematized « à la française » and on their own, they support the whole weight of the general reference to the practice of a so called popular language. The expression « *But who can be unkind to she* » contains an undisputable mistake in English. Lovelace would say and write *to her*. In the French sociocultural context, Prévost cannot allow his character to make a similar mistake. On the other hand, he thinks he can find something equivalent in the perfectly accepted literary code of the « poissard » language, and he transposes: « tout le monde ne doit pas avoir de la bonté pour le beau *sesque* (The word *sesque* taken from the « poissard » language is printed in italics through an excess of precaution: it is true that this word belongs to a code commonly used in theatre but less accepted in novels). In English they say: « *find it to be clene contrary* » which means « I think that things are totally different ». In order to make it sound popular, Prévost resorts to a stylistic device: he adds to the translation a figurative expression: « Je trouve qu'il en est tout autrement. Vous êtes franc comme or fin ». In English they say: « *yet I colde make shift to throe my hat at her, or so, your honner* ». This expression is

<sup>31</sup> They are also printed in italics in the original English version because they are quotations made by Leman. But considering Prévost's habits when translating, we can believe that italics here have a double function. They show that it is a quotation and underline the strangeness. In *L'ours bleu*, italics only have the second function (« *Blew Bore* » is written in roman characters, in the English version).

borrowed from the boxing circles. (You throw your hat on the ring in order to challenge someone). It is embellished by Leman's vernacular who says *colde* instead of *could*, *throe* instead of *throw*, *honner* instead of *honour*. The French Leman has to speak the common language and speak it in a grammatically correct way. What's more he is ignorant of boxing but remembers the chivalry tournaments of the Middle Ages. He therefore writes in a very noble manner: « Je ne souffrirais jamais qu'elle me mette le pied sur la gorge ».

There are other unexpected traits of nobility in Prévost's translation such as this subjunctive imperfect tense: « je souhaiterais, si vous avez cette bonté, que vous ne m'appelassiez pas si souvent *honnête Joseph* ». For Prévost grammatical accuracy decisively prevails over the concern about social and psychological likelihood, which is in fact fairly secondary. Prévost only concedes to use stylistic marks belonging to specific literary codes with the exclusion of strictly linguistic marks.

In *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Rousseau proceeds in the same manner. You could have expected from the « Citoyen de Genève » who was brought up in the lower town, then in Bossey, then apprenticed at the age of thirteen, that he should be more sensitive than any of his contemporaries to the sociolinguistic realities and should try to reproduce the genuine language of the common people. But unlike a common and well grounded opinion, I would not say of letter XL out of the first part of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (a letter from Fanchon Regard to Julie) that it is a masterpiece as far as natural is concerned. In contrary, it is a typical literary *artefact*, that strictly follows the dictates of good manners which Prévost defined.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> For example Bernard Guyon writes (Gallimard, Pléiade, 1961, p. 1140-1141): « The main interest of this letter is the research of a « peasant » or « popular » style... We shall note the efforts in finding the right tone, plain and true, tinged with a charming sense of propriety... and the refusal to resort to the « picturesque » which Molière used so much, and which would have destroyed the naïve charm of this letter through an effect of slapstick comedy. The stylization is nevertheless obvious; for example we can draw a comparison with Thérèse Levasseur's letters ». This is an odd statement full of contradictions, and this is due to the fact that, as usual, the psychological research has been mistaken for the author's true practice. The efforts towards a right true and plain tone are characteristic of the first, but the second is in total contradiction with the people's true practice. (Do compare with Thérèse Levasseur's « true » letters). The quotation marks set by Bernard Guyon on the words « peasant » and « popular » prove on the other hand that these words must not be taken literally: it is indeed a literary convention, a stylistic device. Lastly, if it is true that Rousseau refused the picturesque, we must be aware of the fact that he refused two extreme and antagonistic forms of *picturesque*: 1° Molière's form which consists in underlining the distance between French language and vernacular languages by resorting to a coded language, a literary language in order to distinguish the vernacular. (This generates the « poissard » language.) 2° The parody which would have consisted in making Fanchon write like Thérèse Levasseur or Madame Diderot. This would have created a burlesque effect for the cultivated readers of the novel; and in this case the burlesque effect would have revealed and obscured a social reaction of repulsion.

spelling is true to Rousseau's own use of it; her discourse shows a perfect grammatical accuracy. Things change as far as style is concerned, and even then, with remarkably restricted means. The popular-childish language which appeared in Azolan's or Cecile's letters is implied by the use of the adverb *bien* (really) and of the coordinating conjunction *et puis* (and then): « I was really sad », « a really rich gentleman », « and then Claude Anet ». To these, we can add commonplaces such as « le bon Dieu » (the good Lord); « ma bonne Demoiselle » (my good young Lady); « beaucoup d'avantage » (« a lot more more »); « servante à vous servir » (servant to serve you). We can also note, as in letter CVII of *Les Liaisons*, the tendency to refuse subordinate clauses, which implies it be resorted nearly exclusively to short sentences and parataxes. This again is a convention. Examples reproduced in document N°2 show on the contrary that the writing subject *would like to use subordinates but does not know how to*. The only way for him to avoid the syntaxis chaos which necessarily results from his efforts is to resort to paratax. But in order to do just this, he needs a minimum of grammatical awareness, which he hasn't got. The author, *who has this awareness*, makes a *good* use of paratax. He knows that common people don't naturally use it, but the codes of literary convention forbid him to reproduce their genuine practice. Whithin the scope of strict grammatical accuracy, he makes do with the mode of expression which is the most stylistically distant from the practice of writers who have learnt rhetorics. This compromise enables him to eliminate from the literary field anything susceptible of linguistically deviating from the common norm, and yet, at the same time, thanks to various stylistic conventions, it enables him to represent within this literary field the repressed linguistic practice. As far as this is concerned, there exists a real continuation between Prévost and Rousseau and between Rousseau and Laclos.

It is well worth leaving the strict bounds of written practice to whether it corresponds to phenomena which are observable in another system of textual analysis.

It is rare for a literary text not to bear, filigree, in some point of its structure, -whether subjects, representations or legend, -explicit or implicit indications concerning the stylistic rules that it obeys. Although it is true that letter CVII is isolated in the epistolary corpus that are *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and that to the point of seeming marginal, it is however impossible to say that the novel is reserved about the master to servant relationship, as far as linguistic communication is concerned, which is what we are interested in. On the contrary, it occurs very often.

The presence of servants in *Les Liaisons* is as constant and nearly as disturbing as that of the « dumb » behind the scenes of *Bazajet*. They are numerous and seemingly indispensable to their masters on all occasions of their day- and night- life. But they are considered as furniture or tools, and most of the time anonymous. When they serve well they win flattering attributives *good*, *loyal* (in the same way as dogs). Most of the time they don't execute the orders properly or don't understand them. They are then called *rascal*<sup>33</sup>, *scamp*<sup>34</sup>, *rogue*<sup>35</sup>, *idiot*<sup>36</sup>. When speaking of a servant, the master or mistress will readily say : *this girl*<sup>37</sup>. Collectively they are called *the people*<sup>38</sup>. In the masters' statements, the most commonly used pronoun to name them is quite symbolically the impersonal. « I am told that dinner is being served »; « someone was coming into the lounge. It was only a servant »; « Letters are fetched from here every morning »; « Your letter was given to me »; « It was announced »; « I shouted that it stopped and he may leave. »<sup>39</sup>. None of these features is typical of *Les Liaisons*. They are in fact extremely common in the 18th century novels.

<sup>33</sup> *Liaisons*, Pléiade, p. 62; Azolan to Valmont.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71. Azolan talking about Madame de Tourvel's spy; p. 118, p. 258; Valmont talking about Azolan (three times).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117; Valmont talking about Azolan.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259; Valmont about Azolan.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 372, p. 396; Madame de Volanges about Julie; cf. p. 117, where Valmont sets these words in Azolan's mouth.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221, p. 225 (« the kitchen staff », « my staff », p. 409).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 78, 97, 120, 218, 222.

A more remarkable trait is the fact that the domestics showed in *Les Liaisons* are not naturally speaking subjects. Just as children, it is in their nature to *gossip* and to *prattle*. « Fortunately, the idiot was prattling », says Valmont about Azolan : « I ordered Victoire to go and gossip in the neighbourhood » says Madame de Merteuil. [At first it had been written in the manuscript : « to go and spread scandal »]. « I wouldn't mind forcing them to involve a few domestics in this adventure, because, should things turn the way we expect, the news will have to be spread, and there is no such way », also says Madame de Merteuil<sup>40</sup>.

But, precisely because they are likely to *gossip*, the people are dangerous. They are feared; their masters are frightened of them. It is especially feared that they might talk without discernment, and the matter is no longer the grammatical mistakes that they might make. They are therefore to be constantly supervised, watched, and if necessary subdued. As far as this is concerned, Madame de Merteuil's remark about her « loyal » Victoire in letter LXXXI has a symbolic significance. Victoire is Madame de Merteuil's foster sister, and Madame de Merteuil holds her secret. She saved her from disgrace, but she still has the « lettre de cachet » which could send her to prison. « She knows that her destiny is in my hands, and if ever these strong means would no longer hold her back, is it not obvious that her unveiled conduct and authentic punishment would immediately cast discredit on her words ? » This is the point : The domestics' words are a priori to be *discredited* : under this condition only they will not become dangerous. Today's reader must take this literally and in all its senses.

\*

Etienne Balibar writes in his introduction to *Les Français Fictifs* : « The aesthetical effect is always at the same time an effect of *domination*. It is the subjection of individuals to the prevailing ideology, and the domination of the dominating class' ideology.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 118, 222, 154.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206

<sup>42</sup> *Les Français fictifs*, p. 46.



It is easy to understand that in the sociocultural context in France at the 18th century the dominating classes have always feared the people, and that not only they refused to let them speak, but they also used the literary institution to keep at distance their genuine linguistic practice. At the cost of a few stylistic devices they nevertheless save the illusion that this practice was represented—let's say *figured*—in the works destined to give a likely image of reality, which was the case of the classic novels. Nobody will deny that literature was used to maintain or even increase the necessary distance between the people and their masters, and that it was therefore used to reassure those who were able to read and be convinced of their social superiority. But, for lack of general school system, the domination effect which Etienne Balibar announces wasn't able to exert itself directly on the lower classes: neither Azolan nor Victoire could read *Clarissa*, let alone *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

The effect of domination was only able to exert itself when the descendants of Azolan and Fanchon Regard, duly schooled by the Republic, were able to read actually the French translation of *Clarissa Harlowe*, or *La Nouvelle Heloise* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

This is where begins further research, which would try to make out when these texts were first read in schools, grammar schools or universities, at which level, in which editions, with which kind of cuts, and most and foremost with which *explanatory text*.<sup>43</sup>

The examples which I picked out of editions commonly used in schools, or out of academic works of great merit show that this explanatory text is remarkably well written, and obscures the effects (and also the reasons for these effects) which I have brought to light.

This probably proves that what was at stake in France in the 18th century, and of what Prévost shows the importance, is still of some importance nowadays.

<sup>43</sup> About the explanatory text and its ideological function, see in particular issue N°7 of *Littérature* (1972). See also Guy Fressange, « Le discours didactique dans les manuels de morceaux choisis de français », in *Langue Française*, N°5, February, 1970, pp. 45-69. There have been many similar studies these last few years, but there is still a lot to be done.

## Documents

## Document 1

## AZOLAN AU VICOMTE DE VALMONT

Monsieur,

Conformément à vos ordres, j'ai été, aussitôt la réception de votre Lettre, chez M. Bertrand, qui m'a remis les vingt-cinq louis, comme vous lui aviez ordonné. Je lui en avais demandé deux de plus pour Philippe, à qui j'avais dit de partir sur-le-champ, comme Monsieur me l'avait mandé, et qui n'avait pas d'argent; mais Monsieur votre homme d'affaires n'a pas voulu, en disant qu'il n'avait pas d'ordre de ça de vous. J'ai donc été obligé de les donner de moi et Monsieur m'en tiendra compte, si c'est sa bonté.

Philippe est parti hier au soir. Je lui ai bien recommandé de ne pas quitter le cabaret, afin qu'on puisse être sûr de le trouver si on en a besoin.

J'ai été tout de suite après chez Madame la Présidente pour voir Mademoiselle Julie: mais elle était sortie, et je n'ai<sup>1</sup> parlé qu'à La Fleur, de qui je n'ai pu rien savoir, parce que depuis son arrivée il n'avait été à l'hôtel qu'à l'heure des repas. C'est le second qui a fait tout le service, et Monsieur sait bien que je ne connaissais pas celui-là. Mais j'ai commencé aujourd'hui.

Je suis retourné ce matin chez Mademoiselle Julie, et elle a paru bien aise de me voir. Je l'ai interrogée sur la cause du retour<sup>2</sup> de sa Maîtresse; mais elle m'a dit n'en rien savoir, et je crois qu'elle a dit vrai. Je lui ai reproché de ne pas m'avoir averti de son départ, et elle m'a assuré qu'elle ne l'avait su que le soir même en allant coucher Madame: si bien qu'elle a passé toute la nuit à ranger, et que la pauvre fille n'a pas dormi deux heures. Elle n'est sortie ce soir-là de la chambre de sa Maîtresse qu'à une heure passée, et elle l'a laissée qui se mettait seulement à écrire.

Le matin, Madame de Tourvel, en partant, a remis une Lettre<sup>3</sup> au Concierge du Château. Mademoiselle Julie ne sait pas pour qui: elle dit que c'était peut-être pour Monsieur; mais Monsieur ne m'en parle pas.

Pendant tout le voyage, Madame<sup>4</sup> a eu<sup>5</sup> un grand capuchon sur sa figure, ce qui faisait qu'on ne pouvait la voir: mais Mademoiselle Julie croit être sûre qu'elle a pleuré souvent. Elle n'a pas dit une parole pendant la route, et elle n'a pas voulu s'arrêter à...\*, comme elle avait fait en allant; ce qui n'a pas fait trop de plaisir à Mademoiselle Julie, qui n'avait<sup>6</sup> pas déjeuné. Mais, comme je lui ai dit, les Maîtres sont les maîtres.

En arrivant, Madame s'est couchée; mais elle n'est restée au lit que deux heures. En se levant<sup>7</sup>, elle a fait venir son Suisse<sup>8</sup>, et lui a donné ordre de ne laisser entrer<sup>9</sup> personne. Elle n'a point fait de toilette du tout. Elle s'est mise à table pour dîner; mais elle n'a mangé qu'un peu de potage, et elle en est sortie tout de suite. On lui a porté son café chez elle et Mademoiselle Julie est entrée en même temps. Elle a trouvé sa Maîtresse qui rangeait des papiers dans son secrétaire, et elle a vu que c'était des Lettres<sup>10</sup>. Je parierais bien que ce sont celles de Monsieur; et des trois qui lui sont arrivées dans l'après-midi, il y en a une qu'elle avait encore devant elle tout au soir! Je suis bien sûr que c'est encore une de Monsieur. Mais pourquoi donc est-ce qu'elle s'en est allée comme ça? ça m'étonne, moi! au reste, sûrement que Monsieur le sait bien? Et ce ne sont pas mes affaires.

Madame la Présidente est allée l'après-midi dans <sup>11</sup> la Bibliothèque, et elle y a pris deux Livres qu'elle a emportés dans son boudoir : mais Mademoiselle Julie assure qu'elle n'a pas lu dedans un quart d'heure dans toute la journée, et qu'elle n'a fait que lire cette Lettre, rêver et être appuyée <sup>12</sup> sur sa main. Comme j'ai imaginé que Monsieur serait bien aise de savoir quels sont ces Livres-là; et que Mademoiselle Julie ne le savait pas, je me suis fait mener aujourd'hui dans la Bibliothèque, sous prétexte de la voir. Il n'y a de vide que pour <sup>13</sup> deux Livres : l'un est le second volume des *Pensées chrétiennes*; et l'autre, le premier d'un Livre, qui a pour titre *Clarisse*<sup>14</sup>. J'écris bien comme il y a : Monsieur saura peut-être ce que c'est.

Hier au soir, Madame n'a pas soupé; elle n'a pris que du thé.

Elle a sonné de bonne heure ce matin; elle a demandé ses chevaux tout de suite, et elle a été avant neuf heures, aux Feuillants, où elle a entendu la Messe <sup>15</sup>. Elle a voulu se confesser; mais son Confesseur était absent, et il ne reviendra pas de huit à dix jours <sup>16</sup>. J'ai cru qu'il était bon de mander cela à Monsieur.

Elle est rentrée ensuite, elle a déjeuné, et puis s'est mise à écrire, et elle y est restée jusqu'à près d'une heure. J'ai trouvé occasion de faire bientôt ce que Monsieur désirait le plus : car c'est moi qui ai porté les Lettres à la poste. Il n'y en avait pas pour Madame de Volanges : mais j'en envoie une à Monsieur, qui était pour M. le Président : il m'a paru que ça devait être la plus intéressante. Il y en avait une <sup>17</sup> aussi pour Madame de Rosemonde, mais j'ai imaginé que Monsieur la verrait toujours bien quand il voudrait, et je l'ai laissée partir. Au reste, Monsieur saura bien tout, puisque Madame la Présidente lui écrit aussi. J'aurai <sup>18</sup> par la suite toutes celles qu'il voudra; car c'est presque toujours Mademoiselle Julie qui les remet aux Gens, et elle m'a assuré que par amitié pour moi, et puis aussi pour Monsieur, elle ferait volontiers ce que je voudrais <sup>19</sup>.

Elle n'a pas même voulu de l'argent que je lui ai offert : mais je <sup>20</sup> pense bien que Monsieur voudra lui faire quelque petit présent; et si c'est sa volonté, et qu'il veuille m'en charger, je saurai aisément ce qui lui fera plaisir.

J'espère que Monsieur ne trouvera pas que j'aie mis de la négligence à le servir, et j'ai bien à coeur de me justifier des reproches qu'il me fait. Si je n'ai pas su le départ de Madame la Présidente <sup>21</sup>, c'est au contraire mon zèle pour le service de Monsieur qui en est cause, puisque c'est lui qui m'a fait partir à trois heures du matin; ce qui fait que je n'ai pas vu Mademoiselle Julie la veille, au soir, comme de coutume, ayant été coucher au Tournebride, pour ne pas réveiller dans le Château.

Quant à ce que Monsieur me reproche d'être souvent sans argent, d'abord c'est que j'aime à me tenir proprement, comme Monsieur peut voir ; et puis, il faut bien soutenir l'honneur de l'habit qu'on porte; je sais bien que je devrais <sup>22</sup> peut-être un peu épargner pour la suite; mais je me confie entièrement dans la générosité de Monsieur, qui est si bon Maître.

Pour ce qui est d'entrer au service de Madame de Tourvel, en restant <sup>23</sup> à celui de Monsieur, j'espère que Monsieur ne l'exigera pas de moi. C'était bien différent chez Madame la Duchesse; mais assurément je n'irai pas porter la livrée, et encore une livrée de Robe, après avoir eu l'honneur d'être Chasseur de Monsieur. Pour tout ce qui est du reste, Monsieur peut disposer de celui qui a l'honneur d'être avec autant de respect que d'affection, son très <sup>24</sup> humble serviteur.

ROUX AZOLAN, Chasseur.  
Paris, ce 5 octobre 17\*\*\*, à onze heures du soir.  
[Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, Paris,  
Gallimard, Pléiade, 1951, p.277-280]

## Document 2

## A. Mme Jodin à sa fille :

« Mon cher enfant qu'il m'est attare d'avoir de tes nouvelle. Il n'y aura que ta lettre qui me consolera Dans la peine où je suis que le Seigneur te conserve Car je n'ai que toit dans l'esprit par ce que tu m'écrit et que tu manvera quel chose de tes bienfait adresse à Mr Diderot Car il n'y a queux en qui je me puise me confier en natandan je tembrase de tout mon coeur et je suis ton affectionnée mere Jodin adieu mon chere enfant.

## B. Mme Diderot à Mlle Jodin :

Mademoiselle, je finie vostre lestre en vous priant de ne me point oublier pour du marte et si il est a bon conte vous pouriez an nanvoier à votre maman en nous moveant le prix juste elle y gagneroit quelque chose, mais si il est cher ne man navoiez que pour faire la bordure d'une plice. Nous faisons ce que nous pouvons pour consoler vostre chere mère qui est fort changée. Songée à vous conserver pour elle et lui écrire le plutaux qu'il vous cera possible, adieu je vous anbrace et suis vostre tres humble servante.

ce 21 aoust 1765.

femme Diderot.

## C. Mme Diderot à Mlle Jodin :

Mademoiselle, ne soiez pas asé imprudante de faire conoître à Mr. Vogée ni à vostre mère ce que mon mari vous mande, Car il luy dit tout ce que vous luy écrivez.

a dieu, mademoise, je vous soueste une parfaite santé et tout ce que vostres coeur désire et je vous embrace de tout mon coeur.

femme Diderot

## D. Mme Jodin à sa fille :

Ma chere fille,

J'ai resu ta leitre du 21 join qui m'a fait baucout de plaisir daprandre que tu te porte bien et que tu et au conble de tes dessir. sais touseque je soite au monde de te voir entre les bras de tousse que tu adore il le mairite biens. je fait dé veux au ciell pour sa conservasson ausi bien que la tiesne qui mais bien chere ma chere fille j'ai resut de madame Dideros ton portres que j'ai bessez avec des larmes de gois. Madame deros me la faimaitre dans ma tabatière et j'ai vut celui de Mr le Conte qui est bien resamblan. j'ai resus de Mr Diros ta pansion du roy qui et venue for ta propos, je suis dans mon nartement bien rangee par les soin de Mr roge tus me faices espairer par tes leitre que tu viendras a paris avec Mr le conte. tu napabesoins de cercher dotre autelle que le mien car il les forgolis vois is poves loges tous les deux. mont Dieu quelle plaisir pour moy sis jaives ce bosneur de nous revoir les pesrance me fais vivre. j'ai étés chez Mr roger pour recevoir les 2 sanfran il madi quile ne lais asves pas encore su et que dabor qui lais osrererui qui me laisa porterais je nansuis poin inquiete. - il mais revenu que ta fame de chanbre etcris atoute c'est quasmarade touse qui se pache monsieur le conte je taverdi de tous sas insi pransi garde, je te dirait que la fersderique a pour amant un valles de chanbre et les bien dans la misere je lui a fait dire quelle ne maite jamai le piechemois j'ai des compliman ate faire de Mr Fol et Mr Balion. Ta tante t'anbrace de tout son coeur et de M(ad) laroche qui tans brace de toute son name. je te prie ma chère fille de mais crir avantons de par de tesbin j'ai spaire [que] tu me fera se plasir, adieu ma chere je tanbrace de tous mon coeur et [suis] ta bonne mere Jodin.

Si tu veux, asures de mais repet Mr tu et la maîtresse si tu le trouve a propo.

[Diderot, *Correspondance*, éd. par G. Roth et J. Varloot, Paris, Ed. de Minuit, 1955-1970, t. V, p. 105-106; t. VI, p. 241; t. VIII, p. 69-70.]

### Document 3

#### LETTER XCIII.

Joseph LEMAN, A.M. Robert LOVELACE <sup>1</sup>.

Dimanche, 9 avril.

Monsieur,

Je suis fort obligé à votre bonté. Mais votre dernier commandement me paraît bien fort. Dieu me pardonne et vous aussi, monsieur, vous m'avez engagé dans une grande affaire; et si la mèche était découverte... Mais Dieu aura pitié de mon corps et de mon âme, et vous me promettez de me prendre sous votre protection, et d'augmenter mes gages, ou de m'établir dans une bonne hôtellerie, ce qui fait toute mon ambition. Vous aurez de la bonté aussi pour notre jeune demoiselle, que je recommande à Dieu. Tout le monde n'en doit-il pas avoir pour le beau *sesque* ?

J'exécuterai vos ordres le plus fidèlement qu'il me sera possible, puisque vous dites que vous la perdriez, si je ne le faisais pas, et qu'un homme aussi avare que M. Solmes serait capable de la gagner. Mais j'espère que notre jeune demoiselle ne nous donnera pas tant de peine. Si elle a promis, je suis persuadé qu'elle tiendra parole.

Je serais bien fâché de ne pas vous rendre service, quand je vois que vous avez la bonté de ne vouloir faire du mal à personne. J'avais cru, avant que de vous connaître, que vous étiez fort méchant, ne vous déplaie. Mais je trouve qu'il en est tout autrement. Vous êtes franc comme or fin; et même, autant que je le vois, vous ne souhaitez que du bien à tout le monde, comme je le sais aussi; car, quoique je ne sois qu'un pauvre domestique, j'ai la crainte de Dieu et des hommes, et je profite des bons discours et des bons exemples de notre jeune demoiselle, qui ne va nulle part sans sauver une âme ou deux, plus ou moins. Ainsi, me recommandant à votre amitié, et vous priant de ne pas oublier l'hôtellerie, quand vous en trouverez une bonne, je vous servirai bien dans cette espérance. Vous en trouverez de reste, si vous cherchez bien; car aujourd'hui, comme le monde va, les places ne sont pas des héritages: et j'espère que vous ne me regarderez pas comme un malhonnête homme, parce qu'il peut paraître que je vous sers contre mon devoir: avec une bonne conscience, on ne craint pas les mauvaises langues. Cependant je souhaiterais, si vous avez cette bonté, que vous ne m'appellassiez pas si souvent *honnête Joseph*, *honnête Joseph*. Quoique je me croie fort honnête, comme vous le dites, je craindrais

<sup>1</sup> L'auteur s'attachant à garder les caractères, pousse ici la fidélité jusqu'à donner cette lettre avec les fautes de langage et d'orthographe qui sont ordinaires dans la condition de Leman. Mais le goût de notre nation n'admettant point de si grossières peintures, il suffira de conserver un style et des traits de simplicité qui puissent faire reconnaître un valet.

de ne pas paraître tel aux yeux des méchantes gens qui ne connaissent pas mes intentions; et vous avez aussi l'humeur si facétieuse, qu'on ne sait pas si vous dites ces choses-là sérieusement. Je suis un pauvre homme qui n'ai jamais écrit à des seigneurs, ainsi vous ne serez pas surpris, ne vous déplaie, si je n'ai pas tant d'éloquence que vous.

Pour mademoiselle Betty, j'ai cru d'abord qu'elle avait des vues au dessus de moi. Cependant je vois qu'elle s'apprivoise peu à peu. J'aurais beaucoup plus d'amitié pour elle, si elle était meilleure pour notre jeune demoiselle. Mais je crains qu'elle n'ait trop d'esprit pour un pauvre homme tel que moi. Au bout du compte, quoiqu'il ne soit pas trop honnête de battre une femme, je ne souffrirai jamais qu'elle me mette le pied sur la gorge. Cette recette, que vous avez la bonté de me promettre, me donnera du courage, et je crois qu'elle serait fort agréable pour tout le monde, pourvu que cela se passe honnêtement, comme vous l'assurez, à peu près dans l'espace d'une année. Cependant, si mademoiselle Betty se tourne bien, je pourrais souhaiter que cela dure un peu plus long-temps; surtout lorsque nous aurons à gouverner une hôtellerie, où je crois qu'une bonne langue et une tête malicieuse ne gâtent rien dans une femme.

Mais je crains de paraître impertinent avec un seigneur de votre qualité. C'est vous-même aussi qui me mettez en train par votre exemple, car vous avez toujours le mot pour rire; et puisque vous m'avez ordonné de vous écrire familièrement sur tout ce qui me vient à l'esprit; sur quoi vous demandant pardon, je vous promets encore une fois toute diligence et toute exactitude, et je demeure votre obéissant serviteur, prêt à tous vos commandements.

Joseph Leman.

[S. Richardson, *Clarisse Harlove*, trad. par l'abbé Prévost, Paris, Boulé, 1846, t. I, p. 369-397]

### Document 4

#### LETTER XCVI - To Robert Lovelace, Esquier. His Honner

Sunday Morning, April 9.

HONNERED SIR, - I must confesse I am infinitely oblidge to your honner's bounty. But this last command! - it seems so intricket! Lord be merciful to me, how have I been led from little stepps to grate stepps! And if I should be found out! But your honner says you will take me into your honner's sarvise, and proteckt me, if as I should at any time be found out; and raise my wages besides; or set me upp in a good inne; which is my ambishion. And you will be honnerable and kind to my dearest young lady, God love her. But who can be unkind to she?

I will do the best I am able, since your honner will be apt to lose her, as your honner says, if I do not; and a man so stingie will be apt to gain her. But mayhap my dearest younge lady will not make all this trouble needful. If she has promissed, she will stand to it, I dare to say.

I love your honner for contriveing to save mischiff so well. I thought till I knowed your honner, that you was verry mischevous, and plesse your honner. But find it to be clene contrary. Your honner, it is plane, means mighty well be everybody,



as far as I see. As I am sure I do myself; for I am, althoff a very plane man, and all that, a very honest one, I thank my God. And have good principels, and have kept my young lady's precepts always in mind : for she goes nowhere, but saves a soul or two, more or less.

So, commending myself to your honner's further favour, not forgetting the inne, when your honner shall so please, and a good one offers; for plases are no inherritanses nowadays. And I hope your honner will not think me a dishonest man for sarvinge your honner agenst my duty, as it may look; but only as my consence clears me.

Be pleased, howsoever, if it like your honner, not to call me *honest Joseph*, and *honest Joseph* so often. For, althoff I think myself very honest, and all that; yet I am touched a little, for fear I should not do the quite right thing : and too besides, your honner has such a fesseshious way with you, as that I hardly know whether you are in jest or earnest when your honner calls me honest so often.

I am a very plane man, and seldom have writ to such honourable gentlemen; so you will be good enuff to pass by everything, as I have often said, and need not now say over again.

As to Mrs. Betty; I tho'te, indede, she looked above me. But she comes on very well, nathelesse. I could like her better iff she was better to my young lady. But she has too much wit for so plane a man. Natheless, if she was to angrer me, althoff it is a shame to bete a woman; yet I colde make shift to throe my hat at her, or so, your honner.

But that same reseit, iff your honner so please, to cure a shrowish wife. It would more encurrege to wed, iff so be one knowed it beforehand, as one may say. So likewise, if one knowed one could *honestly*, as your honner says, and as of the handywork of God, in one twelvemonth---

But I shall grow impertinent to such a grate man - and *hereafter* may do for that, as she turnes out : for one mought be loath to part with her, mayhap, so *very* soon too; especially if she was to make the notable lanlady your honner put into my head.

Butt wonce moer, beging your honer's parden, and promissing all dilligence and exsacknesse, I reste,

Your honner's dewtifull sarvant to commande,

JOSEPH LEMAN.

[S. Richardson, *Clarissa Harlowe*, London, Everyman's library, 1962, t.I, p.492-493]

#### Document 5

#### LETTER CXXXIII.

JOSEPH LEMAN A M. ROBERT LOVELACE.

16 avril.

Il informe M. LOVELACE de la persécution à laquelle ses maîtres se préparent contre lui, pour le rapt de miss Betterton, qu'il avait enlevée à sa famille, et qui

étant morte en couches avait laissé un enfant de lui, encore vivant, dont on l'accusait de ne prendre aucun soin. Joseph lui apprend, avec sa simplicité ordinaire, que ses maîtres donnent le nom d'infâme à cette aventure; mais il espère, dit-il, que Dieu ne permettra pas qu'elle le soit, quoiqu'on publie que M. LOVELACE a été obligé de quitter le royaume pour se mettre à couvert, et que le désir de voyager n'a été qu'un prétexte. Il ajoute que c'est une des histoires que M. Solmes aurait souhaité de pouvoir raconter à mademoiselle CLARISSE si elle avait été disposée à l'écouter.

Il prie M. Lovelace de lui avouer si cette affaire peut mettre sa vie en danger; et, par l'affection qu'il lui porte, il souhaite qu'il ne soit pas pendu, comme un homme du commun, mais qu'il n'ait que la tête coupée; et qu'il ait la bonté de se souvenir de lui avant la sentence, parce qu'il a entendu dire que tous les biens des criminels appartiennent au roi ou à la justice.

Il lui marque que le capitaine Singleton est souvent en conférence secrète avec son jeune maître et sa jeune maîtresse, et que son jeune maître a dit, en sa présence, au capitaine, *que son sang bouillait pour la vengeance*; qu'en même temps, son jeune maître a fait l'éloge de lui, Joseph, en vantant au capitaine sa fidélité et son entendement. Ensuite il offre ses services à M. Lovelace, pour prévenir les accidents fâcheux, et pour mériter sa protection, dans la vue qu'il a de prendre l'hôtellerie de l'Ours bleu, dont on lui a dit beaucoup de bien. Ce n'est pas tout, ajoute-t-il. La jolie ourse, c'est-à-dire Betty Barnes, lui roule aussi dans la tête. Il espère qu'il pourra l'aimer plus que M. Lovelace ne voudrait, parce qu'elle commence à lui paraître de bonne humeur, et à l'écouter avec plaisir lorsqu'il parle de l'Ours bleu, comme si elle était déjà dit-il, pour continuer la figure, *au milieu de l'orge et des fèves*. Il demande pardon là-dessus, pour ce bon mot qui lui échappe; parce que tout pauvre qu'il est, il a toujours aimé l'agréable plaisanterie.

Il dit que sa conscience lui reproche quelquefois ce qu'il a fait; et qu'il croit que, sans les histoires que M. Lovelace lui a fait raconter dans la famille, il aurait été impossible que le père et la mère eussent eu le coeur si dur; quoique M. James et mademoiselle Arabelle aient beaucoup de malice. Ce qui lui paraît le pire, c'est que M. et madame Harlove ne pourront jamais bien éclaircir les affaires avec mademoiselle Clarisse, parce qu'ils croient que toutes ces histoires sont venues de la bouche du valet de chambre de M. Lovelace. Il se gardera bien de les déromper, de peur, dit-il, que M. Lovelace ne tue son valet de chambre et lui aussi, pour rejeter leur mort sur ceux qui ont commencé à vouloir les corrompre. Cependant, il craint bien dans le fond de n'être qu'un misérable. Mais il n'en a jamais eu l'intention.

Il espère aussi que si sa très chère et très honorée jeune maîtresse, mademoiselle Clarisse, se laissait aller à mal, M. Lovelace voudra bien se souvenir de l'abreuvoir de l'Ours bleu. Mais il prie le ciel de le préserver de toute mauvaise vue, comme de toute mauvaise action. N'étant pas encore fort vieux, il espère qu'il aura le temps de se repentir, s'il pêche par ignorance, et puis M. Lovelace est un homme de grande qualité et de grand esprit, qui est capable de répondre de tout, pour un pauvre domestique tel que son très humble et très fidèle serviteur,

JOSEPH LEMAN.

[S. Richardson, *Clarissa Harlove*, trad. par l'abbé Prévost, Paris, Boulé, 1846, t.I, p.511-512]

## Document 6

LETTER XL - To Robert Lovelace, Esq., His Honner

Sat., Apr. 15.

May it plesse your Honner, - This is to let your Honner knoe as how I have been employed in a bisness I would have been excused from, if so be I could. For it is to gitt evidense from a young man, who is of late com'd out to be my cuzzen by my granmother's side; and but lately come to live in these partes, about a verry vile thing, as younge master calls it, relating to your Honner. God forbid I should call it so without your leafe. It is not for so plane a man as I be, to tacks my betters. It is consarning one Miss Batirton, of Notingham; a verry pritty crature, belike.

Your Honner got her away, it seems, by a false letter to her, macking believe as howe her she-cuzzen, that she derely loved, was coming to see her; and was tacken ill upon the rode; and so Miss Batirton set out in a shase and one sarvent, to fet her cuzzen from the inne where she laid sick, as she thote; and the sarvant was tricked, and braute back the shase; but Miss Batirton was not harde of for a month or so. And when it came to passe, that her frends found her oute and would have prosekutid your Honner, your Honner was gone abroad; and so she was broute to bed, as one may say, before your Honner's return; and she got colde in her lyin-inn, and lanquited, and soon died; and the child is living; but your Honner never troubles your Honner's hedd about it in the least. And this, and some such other matters, of verry bad reporte, Squier Solmes was to tell my young lady of, if so be she would have harde him speke, before we lost her sweet company, as I may say, from heere.

I hope your Honner will excuse me; but I was forced to tell all I harde, because they had my cuzzen in to them, and he would have said he had tolde me; so could not be meley-mouthed, for fere to be blone up, and plesse your Honner

Your Honner helped me to a many ugly stories to tell against your Honner to my younge master and younge mistriss; butt did not tell me about this.

I most humbely beseche your Honner to be good and kinde and fethful to my dearest younge lady, now you have her; or I shall brake my harte for having done some dedes that have helped to bring things to this passe. Pray youre dere good Honner, be just ! Prayey do ! As God shall love ye ! prayey do ! I cannot write no more for this present for verry fear and grief -

But now I am cumm'd to my writing agen, will youre Honner be plesed to tell me if as how there be any danger to your Honner's life from this bisness; for my cuzzen is actlie hier'd to go down to Miss Batirton's frendes to see if they will stir in it; for you must kno' your Honner, as how he lived in the Batirton family at the time, and could be a good evidense and all that.

I hope it was not so verry bad as Titus says it was; for hee ses as how there was a rape in the case betwixt you at furste, and plesse your Honner and my cuzzen Titus is a verry honist younge man as ever brocke bred. This is his carackter; and this made me willinger to owne him for my relation when we came to talck.

If there should be danger of your Honner's life, I hope your Honner will not be hanged like as one of us common men; only have your hedd cut off or so; and yet it is pittie such a hedd should be lossed; but if as how it shoulde be prosekutid to that furr, which God forbid, be plesed nathless to thinck of youre fethful Joseph

Leman before your hedd be condemned; for after condemnation, as I have been told, all will be the king's or the shreeve's.

I thote as how it was best to acquent your Honner of this; and for you to let me kno' if I could do anything to sarve your Honner, and prevent mischief with my cuzzen Titus, on his coming back from Notingham, before he mackes his reporte.

I have gin him a hinte already; for what, as I sed to him, cuzzen Titus, signifies stirring up the coles, and macking of strief, to make rich gentilfolkes live at varience, and to be cutting of throtes and such-like ?

Verry trewe, sed little Titus. And this, and plesse your Honner, gis me hopes of him, if so be your Honner gis me directions; sen', as God kno'es, I have a poor, a verry poor invenshon; only a willing mind to prevent mischef, that is the chief of my aim, and always was, I bless my God ! Els I could have made mutch mischef in my time; as indeed any sarvant may. Your Honner nathless praises my invenshon every now and then; alas ! and plesse your Honner, what invenshon should suche a plane man as I have ? But when your Honner sets me agoing by your fine invenshon, I can do well enuff. And I am sure I have a hearty good will to deserve your Honner's faver, if I mought.

Two days, as I may say, off and on, have I been writing this long letter. And yet I have not sed all I would say. For be it knone unto your Honner, as how I do not like that Capten Singelton, which I told you of in my two last letters. He is always laying his hedd and my young master's hedd together; and I suspect much if so be some mischef is not going on between them, and still the more as because my eldest young lady semes to be joined to them sometimes.

Last week my young master sed before my fase, *My harte's blood boiles over, Capten Singelton, for revenge upon this* - and he called your Honner by a name it is not for such a won as me to say what. Capten Singelton whispred my younge master, being I was by. So younge master sed, *You may say anything before Joseph; for althoff he looks so seellie, he has as good a harte and as good a hedd as any sarvante in the worlde nede to have.* My conscience touched me just then. But why shoulde it ? when all I do is to prevente mischeff; and seeing your Honner has so much patience, which younge master has not; so am not affeard to telling your Honner anything whatsoever.

And furthermore, I have suche a desire to desarve your Honner's bounty to me, as mackes me let nothing pass I can tell you of, to prevent harm; and too, besides your Honner's goodness about the Blew Bore; which I have so good an accounte of ! - I am sure I shall be bounden to bless your Honner the longest day I have to live.

And then the Blew Bore is not all neither; sen', and plesse your Honner, the pritty Sowe (God forgive me for gesting in so serus a matter) runs in my hedd likewise. I believe I shall love her mayhap more than your Honner would have me; for she begins to be kind and good-humered, and listens, and plesse your Honner, licke as if she was among beans, when I talke about the Blew Bore and all that.

Prayey, your Honner, forgive the gesting of a poor plane man. We common fokes have our joys, and plesse your Honner, lick as our betters have; and if we be sometimes snubbed, we can find our underlings to snub them agen; and if not, we can git a wife mayhap, and snub her, so are masters somehow or other ourselfs.

But how I try your Honner's patience ! Sarvants will show their joiful hartes, thoff but in partinens, when encouredg'd.

Be plesed form the prems's to let me kno' if as how I can be put upon any sarvice to sarve your Honner, and to sarve my deerest younge lady; which God grant ! for I begin to be affeard for her, hearing what pepel talck - to be sure your Honner

will not do her no harm as a man may say. But I know your Honner must be good to so wonderous a younge lady. How can you help it? But heere your conscience smites me, that but for some of my stories, which your Honner taute me, my old master and my old lady, and the two old squiers, would not have been abell to be half so hard-hearted as they be, for all what my young master and young mistress sayes.

And here is the sad thing; they cannot come to clere up matters with my deerest young lady, because, as your Honner has ordered it, they have these stories as if bribed by me out of your Honner's sarvant; which must not be known for fere you should kill'n and me too, and blacken the briber! Ah! your Honner! I doute as that I am a very vild fellow (Lord bless my soul, I pray God) and did not intend it.

But if my deerest younge lady should come to harm, and plesse your Honner, the horsepond at the Blew Bore - but Lord preserve us all from all bad mischeff, and all bad endes, I pray the Lord! For tho'ff your Honner is kinde to me in worldly pelff, yet what shall a man get to loos his soul, as holy Skrittuer says, and plesse your Honner?

But natheless I am in hope of reppentence hereafter, being but a younge man, if I do wrong thro' ignorrens; your Honner being a grate man and a grate wit; and I a poor crature not worthy notice; and your Honner able to answer for all. But howsomever I am

Your Honner's fethful sarvant in all dewtie,  
JOSEPH LEMAN.

April 15 and 16

[S. Richardson, *Clarissa Harlowe*, London, Everyman's library, 1962, t.II, p.143-147]

#### Document 7

#### DE FANCHON REGARD A JULIE.

Mademoiselle,

Pardonnez une pauvre fille au desespoir, qui ne sachant plus que devenir ose encore avoir recours à vos bontés. Car vous ne vous lassez point de consoler les affligés, et je suis si malheureuse qu'il n'y a que vous et le bon Dieu que mes plaintes n'importunent pas. J'ai eu bien du chagrin de quitter l'apprentissage où vous m'aviez mise; mais ayant eu le malheur de perdre ma mere cet hiver, il a falu revenir auprès de mon pauvre pere que sa paralysie retient toujours dans son lit.

Je n'ai pas oublié le conseil que vous aviez donné à ma mere de tacher de m'établir avec un honnête homme qui prit soin de la famille. Claude Anet que Monsieur votre pere avoit ramené du Service est un brave garçon, rangé, qui sait un bon métier, et qui me veut du bien. Après tant de charité que vous avez eue pour nous, je n'osois plus vous être incommode, et c'est lui qui nous a fait vivre pendant tout l'hiver. Il devoit m'épouser ce printems; il avoit mis son coeur à ce mariage. Mais on m'a tellement tourmentée pour payer trois ans de loyer échu à Pâques, que ne sachant où prendre tant d'argent comptant, le pauvre jeune homme s'est engagé derechef sans m'en rien dire dans la Compagnie de Monsieur de Merveilleux, et m'a apporté

l'argent de son engagement. Monsieur de Merveilleux n'est plus à Neufchâtel que pour sept ou huit jours, et Claude Anet doit partir dans trois ou quatre pour suivre la recrue: ainsi nous n'avons pas le tems ni le moyen de nous marier, et il me laisse sans aucune ressource. Si par votre crédit ou celui de Monsieur le Baron, vous pouviez nous obtenir au moins un delai de cinq ou six semaines, on tâcheroit pendant ce tems-là de prendre quelque arrangement pour nous marier ou pour rembourser ce pauvre garçon; mais je le connois bien; il ne voudra jamais reprendre l'argent qu'il m'a donné.

Il est venu ce matin un Monsieur bien riche m'en offrir beaucoup d'avantage; mais Dieu m'a fait la grace de le refuser. Il a dit qu'il reviendrait demain matin savoir ma dernière résolution. Je lui ai dit de n'en pas prendre la peine et qu'il la savait déjà. Que Dieu le conduise, il sera reçu demain comme aujourd'hui. Je pourrais bien aussi recourir à la bourse des pauvres, mais on est si méprisé qu'il vaut mieux pâtir: et puis, Claude Anet a trop de coeur pour vouloir d'une fille assistée.

Excusez la liberté que je prends, ma bonne Demoiselle; je n'ai trouvé que vous seule à qui j'ose avouer ma peine, et j'ai le coeur si serré qu'il faut finir cette lettre. Votre bien humble et affectionnée servante à vous servir.

Fanchon Regard.

[J.J. Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Paris, Gallimard, Pléiade, 1961, p.119-120]



## THE VALUES OF LIBERALISM IN *El Periquillo Sarniento*\*

Edmond CROS

### 1. *Literary Institution and Discursive Practices*

The study of the relationship between Literature and History whose existence we all postulate constitutes an extremely vast and complex field of reflection. For this reason, rather than examining one particular aspect of the question, I would like to pave the way by asking questions, making suggestions, settling details, with sociocriticism as the starting point. It is quite obvious that our comments concerning these relationships all depend on the disciplines we study (whether we are sociologists, historians, anthropologists or literary people), and within these disciplines they depend on our specializations (the evolution of thoughts, mentalities, literary criticism or the history of literature)... They also depend on the object of our criticism, and this explains why research on how works have been received may be based on a historical reading as well as the analysis of production contexts. Finally these relationships also depend on several controversial scientific or philosophical preliminaries or presuppositions.

If I focus the problem on my own preoccupations, I am led to place myself in relation to a first criterion which joints the literary text to literature and clears it of a certain number of historical or textual categories. This is where we meet up with the first definition problem: What do we mean by Literature and Literary? The answers given to this question up to now do not satisfy everybody because they try to define « literariness » with formal criteria or

\* Translated from French by Hélène Baïssus.

criteria concerning the contents. What we do know is that the criteria of literariness are likely to vary from one society to the next, and within the same society from one period to another.

In the present state of research and from a purely empirical point of view we shall consequently consider as literary what is accepted as being literary. Just as Pierre Bourdieu<sup>1</sup> reminded us, this implies the existence of legitimization proceedings and more generally some kind of apparatus, specific communication networks, and a social practice.

Furthermore, if it does prove difficult to say what literature is, it seems possible to define what it is not, as far as the discursive practice is concerned. If we consider Renée Balibar's and Denis Laporte's analysis of academic practice during the democratic bourgeois revolution<sup>2</sup>, and also Auerbach's earlier research on lower latinity<sup>3</sup>, we are entitled to conclude the specificity of the literary discourse in comparison with other discursive practices. His specific and fictive nature turn the literary discourse into a secondary modeling system.

We shall therefore distinguish this discursive practice from the institution in which it functions, and note that should they both be jointed to the history of our societies, each one evolves in its own time. I shall here take as an example the « *Periquillo Sarniento* » written between 1815 and 1816 generally considered as the first Mexican novel.

In one of his introductory works Fernández de Lizardi, the author, indirectly describes the state of subordination of the Mexican literary institution which is only considered as the extension overseas of the Spanish literary institution. When mentioning the printing costs of books in Mexico, he works out a cost price which takes

<sup>1</sup> « Le marché des biens symboliques », *L'Année Sociologique*, t. 22, 1971, p. 49-126.

<sup>2</sup> Renée Balibar et Denis Laporte, *Le français national : constitution de la langue nationale à l'époque de la révolution démocratique bourgeoise*, Paris, Hachette, 1974 et Renée Balibar, *Les français fictifs, le rapport des styles littéraires au français national*, Paris, Hachette, 1974.

<sup>3</sup> E. Auerbach, *Literatursprache und Publikum in der Lateinischen der französischen Bildung*, Berna, 1951. See Edmond Cros, *Théorie et Pratique Sociocritiques*. Paris/Montpellier. (First Part, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.)

into account the cost of export to Spain, and he concludes that these are unsaleable products. This constitutes « one of the main obstacles to seeing American talent on the literary scene. »<sup>4</sup> The author refuses any form of patronage and takes a definitely antiaristocratic stand when he treats all his potential readers as equals. Here appears the notion of a readership with very vast outlines. This discourse on equality, social homogenization and assimilation is to be related to the ever developing importance in the 18th century Europe of the « transition State Ideological Apparatus » (the expression belongs to Régine Robin) such as Academies, masonic lodges, or in Spain, the « *Society of the Friends of the Country* » (« *Sociedades de amigos del país* »).

Thus, Fernández de Lizardi just reproduces the tensions that the metropolitan institution undergoes and which condition the bourgeois future of culture in a country still dominated by a feudal structure. On the other hand, the F. de Lizardi's attitude towards the Church proves that this latter's power as S.I.A., has been shattered (like in Spain) but also that her weaknesses are far from being as perceptible in Mexico as her decline in the Iberian Peninsula (cf. F. L.'s carefully phrased remarks in another introductory text and this, in order to protect himself from any prosecution from the Church authorities,<sup>5</sup> and within the text itself his concern about counterbalancing his anticlerical portraits with the description of virtuous clergymen.) Thus, these prologues register the specificity of the colonial Institution's state. This specificity becomes more pronounced when we change from the institution to the discursive practice. The two levels of the readership probably do coincide from a certain point of view in the conception of what is the readership : On one hand only the extension of the apparatus will allow the passage from the era of patronage to that of market of symbolic values, and on the other hand, F.L.'s definition implies a social multiracial stratification which does not apply to the mother country; (« I know that some of you will be plebians, indians, mulatto, negros, vicious idiots, and imbeciles ».<sup>6</sup>). Projecting such

<sup>4</sup> P.S., ed. Sainz de Medrano, Madrid, Ed. national. 1976, T. 1, p. 56. The translation is ours.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. quoted p. 65.

<sup>6</sup> Ed. quoted p. 60.

a readership implies that he institutes a narratee who would be sufficiently competent as far as the lower classes are concerned, and nevertheless adapted to the needs and expectations of the cultivated fringe of the potential readers. The author is aware of the difficulties of such a project, and in a kind of postface, he claims a style « which is neither down to earth nor pompous... a family and familiar style which is what we all commonly use and thanks to which we understand each other and are understood more easily ».<sup>7</sup> This quotation might tempt us to try and discover what Bourdieu calls a medium style, destined to a middle class readership, which would prefigure the limits of a vast production field of symbolic values. This, of course, providing we leave aside a surprising passage in the second introductory text, already mentioned, in which the author notes that he has inserted digressions from Latin authors with this interesting emendation as far as we are concerned : « At the same time and in order to prevent the less cultivated readers from stumbling over the Latin, I have left the *Castilian* translation in the text, whereas I sometimes just mentioned the references which I happen to forget completely in a few cases ».<sup>8</sup> The adjective « *Castilian* » used in order to indicate the Spanish language constitutes an ideological turning point which is far from being insignificant.<sup>9</sup> It is indeed a textual indication of the hegemonic institution and of its discursive practice. This contradicts what we have been told about the narrator all the more since the text is riddled with mexicanisms and popular expressions which imply just as many different discursive practices. But what happens with these mexicanisms and popular expressions is similar to what happens with the Latin quotations. Allow me to make a digression, so that things will be more clear. The author in this novel imagines two different and interwoven communication systems :

The essential and autobiographic part of the text is a father telling his children about his life in a didactic viewpoint. The trials and tribulations of his turbulent and nearly delinquent life should lead them to a virtuous way of life. But when the first narrator is too ill to keep on writing, he is replaced by a second one, called *El Pensador*. This is FL's pen name when he signs the articles in *El Pensador Mexicano*, the newspaper he founded.

<sup>7</sup> Ed. quoted, Book II, p. 966.

<sup>8</sup> Ed. quoted, p. 63. In the translation, the stressing is mine.

The latter has been set two tasks as far as the fiction is concerned : he very briefly ends the story in the 3rd person when it had been written previously in the first person.

Being the executor, and contrary to the will of the deceased, he corrects, organizes and publishes the autobiographic text. This means that the critical apparatus is part of the fictive text.

This fictive publisher never feels obliged to translate into Castilian any of the mexicanisms which the text is riddled with; he only interferes once with a mexicanism, and then it does not seem as though he is trying to enlighten a potential Spanish readership but wants to substitute a nahuatl word (*cataxtlé*) for another (*topextle*). This implies, on the contrary, that the narrator and narratee use the same code and are discussing its orthodoxy.<sup>9</sup> In spite of, and within the situation of tight subordination of the Mexican institution to the hegemonic metropolitan institution which I mentioned previously, a discursive practice is developing which is characterized by a certain level of autonomy and specificity and therefore much more distinguishable from the literary discursive practice of the peninsula than from the Spanish institution. If we cannot exactly measure this distance we are lucky enough though to be able to show its projection into the apparatus. An extratextual publisher thought it necessary in 1842 to translate many of these mexicanisms into Castilian. For example, he thought it advisable to say that the term *Pararse* « means *stand up, get up*. This *provincialism* is commonly used here although the verb *pararse* does not have this meaning in Castilian ».<sup>10</sup> He also says of « *chancleta* » : « This word is synonymous in Castilian with « *chinela* », but here it means a shoe with an unstuck heel which makes an unpleasant noise when you walk ».<sup>11</sup> This concern about mentioning the current norms in the peninsula, compared to which the Mexican language is accepted as a provincial dialect, proves, twenty odd years after the Independence, the absence of any cultural identity's awareness. In return, it also gives a great ideological significance to the claim for discursive autonomy which the mexicanisms in the text of the *Periquillo Sarniento* make implicit.

<sup>9</sup> Note of F.L. about the term *tepextle* (see ed. quoted, p. 566).

<sup>10</sup> Note of the 1842 editor concerning the term *párate* Edition quoted, p. 429.

<sup>11</sup> Note of the same editor concerning the word *chancleta* ed. quoted, p. 479. In the translation, I stress the terms *provincialismo* and *castellano*.



Does this interference of the extratextual publisher not prove the fact that in 1842, in spite of the political independence, the Mexican literary institution keeps on projecting itself in the cultural subordination to the ex-mother country, whereas some thirty years earlier, just at the end of the colonial period, the discursive practice was expressing itself in a perspective of rupture? If we limit ourselves to Lizardi's case, we must draw the limits of this rupture and mention that it projects itself in the text as being in the process of realization rather than already realized. This is to be related to the fact that F.L. mentions that he is translating the Latin quotations into *Castilian* and not into Spanish. Whereas the latter, in the 19th century applies as well to the Creoles as to the peninsular Spaniards, the first term, though, is discriminatory and exclusive. This shows once more the backwardness and the difference between the cultural apparatus and the general evolution of the infrastructure, as well as that of the juridical-political superstructure.

In *Periquillo Sarniento*, the difference between the literary institution and the discursive practice is surprisingly neat. Whatever the effect of the individual factor, probably all the more perceptible since Fernandez de Lizardi was first and foremost a journalist, *time* for the institution is a lot slower, incredibly conservative, like a behindhand testimony to the long periodization of history,<sup>12</sup> and is opposed to a discursive practice which is far more sensitive to history, its gestation, and its destiny.

I wish to work on these various discursive practices of *Periquillo Sarniento* from a different point of view now. I would like to study an apparent contradiction where two irreconcilable elements seem to join: i.e., the maintenance of a close subordination to the Castilian cultural hegemony and the forming of a truly Mexican linguistic identity. We must therefore come back to the ambiguities which apply to the narratee's nature, as mentioned earlier. The

<sup>12</sup> This subjection of the Latin-American Institution still exists long after Latin America had obtained her independence. In the last quarter of the XIXth century, the Ecuadorian J.L. Mera exchanges letters with the Spanish writer Valera. Among the main topics that they discuss, we find the project concerning the « americanization of literature » which the Spanish academician considers as an absurd undertaking. His interlocutor's enthusiasm does not stop him from being convinced « that South American literature must keep on being Spanish through form and language; on the contrary, we like that the laws of Castilian good taste be observed, and we are the enthusiastic defenders of the language that our ancestors gave us. » in *Ojeada histórico-crítica sobre la poesía ecuatoriana...2a edición*, Barcelona, Impr. de J. Cunil Sala, 1893, p.601.

illusive and consequently ideological character of F.L.'s ambitions is worthy of a close study when he claims that he is using a style « which we all commonly use and thanks to which we understand each other and get ourselves understood more easily » and at the same time addresses himself to a vast and open readership.

Thus we must be aware of what the text itself tells us of the learning of these various discourses and of how they are likely to function --or not-- in the national and unitarian communication system which F. L. wishes.

Following the preoccupations of the Age of Enlightenment which announce the upheavals to come and which will affect in all Europe the social role of the institution, the narrator describes another ideological Apparatus, in close symbiosis with the Cultural Apparatus, i.e. Education.<sup>13</sup> On one side we find primary school. Its task is to teach how to read, write, and count.<sup>14</sup> It is inseparable from religious tuition,<sup>15</sup> and is in the hands of teachers who don't know themselves how to read and write.<sup>16</sup> When the children leave school they know at the uttermost how to « understand and get understood ». On the other side, we have secondary schools and universities to which poor people do not have access.<sup>17</sup> This social bipartition is in no way surprising. What I am interested in is the fact that this bipartition is not obscured since the narrator says that at primary school he was amongst poor peoples' children<sup>18</sup> whereas he seemingly but not surprisingly mixes with young men with money at high school.<sup>19</sup>

These two schooling levels, from which originate two obvious practices of the Spanish language, have specific functions in the

<sup>13</sup> For practical reasons I use here the term « ideological apparatus » although it is impossible that there exists an *autonomous schooling Apparatus* under the Ancien Regime. See R. B. and D. L. in *Le Français National* (ed. quoted p. 35) It is quite obvious that this also applies to Spain and its colonies.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. ed. quoted, p.103.

<sup>15</sup> « that day, there was no writing, no reading, no praying, no doctrine. Nothing happened », (Ed. quoted, p.95).

<sup>16</sup> See what the narrator says about his own schoolmaster, i.e. that he knew barely enough about reading and writing to understand and get understood. (Ed. quoted, p.88).

<sup>17</sup> See ed. quoted p. 116.

<sup>18</sup> « La tal escuela era a más de pobre mal dirigida, con esto sólo la cursaban los muchachos ordinarios ». We shall remember that *ordinario* is synonymous with *vulgo*. (See the dictionary of Covarrubias).

<sup>19</sup> See ed. quoted, p.119.

society. This explains why Periquillo's parents have an argument about the child's future when he leaves primary school : whereas his father considers himself poor and old and wants to destine him to become a manual worker, his mother puts forward the nobility of her family in order to guard against the possibility of what would be to her mind a sign of decline. In the Ancient Regime's logic which is extremely important in Mexico, social tasks are the reflection of social discriminations. If he goes to high school or to a university, Periquillo is preparing to take up the future of a « *letrado* » or an ecclesiast and he obeys his social vocation.<sup>20</sup> He will then undergo a linguistic training based on Latin grammar and authors, normally destined to prepare the administrative elite of the civil servants. But the father's personal position on the problem comes and disrupts this social panorama since he recommends a professional manual career which is not based on the child's birth but essentially on its natural aptitudes and abilities.

Let's come back to our first intention and we will observe that the narrator's discursive practice is obviously what he was taught during his humanities. The narrator's style is so close to that of a famous author of the Spanish Golden Era that I could say about the former what I have written about the latter, i.e. that he takes advantage of the whole legacy of the humanist period.<sup>21</sup>

The fact remains, as we noticed, that this extratextual practice of the *letrados y ecclesiasticos* language in the discursive practice of the *Periquillo* forms the subject of a kind of internal subversion due to the emergence of a contradictory socio-linguistic practice around which we find effects true to reality.

You will have noticed that I have never referred to what we call History and that I contented myself with letting the text speak for himself in order to bring out more clearly a double relevant contradiction, i.e. :

- 1) a contradiction of classes, which is explicitly revealed by the text and this does not mean knowingly,
- 2) a textual contradiction between the indomitable former contradiction and the narrator's declared pretence of writing in « the way we all speak » which creates a utopian space where the former contradiction would be solved.

<sup>20</sup> See ed. quoted, p.111.

<sup>21</sup> See E. Cros, *Protée et le gueux, recherches sur l'origine et la nature du récit picaresque* in Guzmán of Alfarache of Mateo Alemán. Paris, Didier, 1967.

Thus we are confronted with a projected ideological discursive practice--in so far as the class-differences are abolished within it--which nevertheless shows (due to backlash) what in a real discursive practice is jointed on a forming History.

After these few remarks we can of course think about Renée Balibar's and Dominique Laporte's studies, even if they are centered on slightly different facts, i.e., the direct State intervention on the structure of linguistic exchanges, and the effect of these exchanges on the development of a fictive literary French language. Moreover, these studies concern a society quite distinct from the Mexican, I will nevertheless approve of the connection that they establish between the linguistic standardization processes, and the emergence of the nation form and constitution of a national market which implies a modification of the juridico-linguistic practices in so far as it implies the free movement of goods and labour. (« ...the practice of the standardized language must be one of the requirements for the realization of the bourgeois law »)<sup>22</sup>.

Thus a national and unitarian linguistic practice appears as one of the fundamental requirements for liberalism. Consequently, when projecting this utopian discursive practice, the author is transcribing the aspirations of a social class in forming and a political project.

If we change our viewpoint now and consider the textual genetics, this transcription will become even more apparent.

## II. The Testamentary Structure : Inheritance ↔ Merit Passivity ↔ Independence. The Paternal Concept of Obligations.

The *Periquillo Sarniento* appears first and foremost as belonging to intimate literature as this autobiography was written by a father for his children, so that his unfortunate life would be a lesson to them. The dying man feels too ill to continue his story and he confides the manuscript to the care of his friend Lizardi, well-known under the name of *El Pensador Mexicano*. Lizardi accepts the task of being his executor. Thus, the whole text must be considered as the spiritual will of a father.

<sup>22</sup> In *Le Français National*, op. quoted, p. 68.



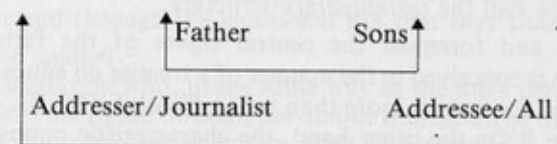
This communication situation is fully brought to light through the fact that the narrator's last words concern the clauses of his will. Once these are settled, he calls his wife and sons to his bedside in order to speak to them one last time and he exhorts them to love and honor God as this is the only way to happiness on earth and to salvation in the beyond. In this last harangue, he tells his offspring to refer to his autobiographic confessions and more particularly to the last recommendations of his own father which he has reported.<sup>23</sup> Lastly, by way of conclusion, the description of his death is followed by a conversation between his widow and executor, where they have to decide whether this spiritual legacy will have to be published or not. These few remarks are enough, I think, to show how the *Periquillo Sarniento*, semantized by two interwoven wills and explicitly presented as the text of a will, is linked to a social practice which it does not only transcribe but also seems to question. And this precisely because its existence is only due to the violation of the fundamental norms which rule this practice, i.e., the religious and sacred respect of a deceased person's will. I must indeed remind that, in his prologue, the narrator wishes that the manuscript always stays in his sons' possession, and contemplates at the uttermost that it could circulate within the limits of a close circle of friends.<sup>24</sup>

No doubt there is an apparent non-appropriateness between the explicit wish to have a readership limited to his sons and between his resorting to a prologue which constitutes a marked sign of the public circulation of the edition and whose existence would justify the fictive publisher's unscrupulousness. A close analysis of this same prologue would prove that the addresser hesitates between two types of addressees, or rather, more precisely, that he superimposes two communication situations. (The I/You, my sons ↔ The I/You reader). This will remind us of the *Lazarillo of Tormes* but we shall nevertheless immediately underline that the respective fictive situations of each autobiography are not comparable (a letter exchange in the first, and the text of a will in the second). Moreover, the *Periquillo Sarniento* presents the process of its making as having a symbolical value, from the moment when the executor takes over

<sup>23</sup> See *Notas del Pensador*, p. 925-930.

<sup>24</sup> « No quisiera que salieran estos cuadernos de sus manos y así se lo encargo; pero como no sé si me obedecerán, ni si se les antojará andar prestándolos a éste y al otro me veo precisado (...) a hacer yo mismo una especie de Prólogo »...p.67.

the manuscript until the moment when, as editor, he corrects it and gives it a critical apparatus. Within the framework itself of the fiction, it is of some importance that the executor be a journalist whose function consists in publishing all his informations, and whose social function, beyond the particular case of Lizardi, is felt by the community as conveying social criticism. In other words, the fact that the narrative authority appoints a journalist to become the actant of the transgression gives this transgression a significance which goes beyond the mere anecdote. We shall therefore avoid talking about a contradiction, and we shall consider how complex the communication situation is, which links together two seemingly irreconcilable systems.



Due to the double fact that the will is subjected to a transgression by a public man who is destined to be the conscience of the community, and that it is jointed to another situation which includes it, the intimate situation of the will's practice appears as something to look at and to look into.

This is all the more remarkable since what I shall briefly, and for the time being, call « the theme of the last will and testament » re-occurs all along the text, either directly, or through one of its main motives. To the three occurrences which I have already noted (the will of Periquillo's father -Periquillo's will- and the Periquillo as text) we find in addition :

--The will of Antonio Sánchez, represented by the evocation of his *albacea's* dishonesty (p. 363 and ff)

--The will of the marquis who wishes to make amends for his conduct prejudicial to Antonio Sánchez (p. 432)

--The will of the *Trapiento's* father (p. 571)

--The Colonel's will in Periquillo's favor (p. 735)

--The inheritance of the *mayorazgo*, after Damian's death (in favor of Don Tadeo Mayoli, called *El Trapiento*) (p. 895)

--The will of Periquillo's master, in favor of Periquillo (p. 915)



This series is significant in itself, and functions as a kind of narrative relay which gives impulse to, moves and reverses situations as far as the diegesis is concerned. The executor is a *deus ex machina* who sometimes ruins young people with money through his embezzlements, and who, in Antonio Sánchez' case, is at the origin of the numerous misfortunes of this unlucky character. Sometimes, on the contrary, he gives fortune and happiness to people who thought they'd always be deprived of them. Here the executor plays the part of fate and acts in the text as the main dramatic moving forces of the story.

The major part played by the transcription of this social practice in the meaning production is confirmed if I put together the various textual realizations of the main components which amount to what I shall now call the *testamentary structure*.

First and foremost the central figure of the father. The Periquillo is conceived in the manner of a treatise on education and is intended for fathers more than sons : (Book I, Ch. III, « ...-ch. XIV... »).<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, the characteristic opposition on which is built the picaresque story between the old man and the new man, the actant and the narrator, significantly confronts here an unworthy son (in the first 25 chapters in particular) and the exemplary father that Periquillo has become. This distance enables us to measure the structure of the will. Whereas the reading of his father's will had only very slightly moved Periquillo,<sup>26</sup> this is the only precise passage that he mentions to his sons from his deathbed, and thus implicitly shows them that it contains all the pieces of advice and moral that his autobiography illustrates in a different manner, and more precisely with the *argumentum a contrario*.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, in the (short) series of Periquillo's words to his sons<sup>28</sup> the respective voices of the two men seem to coincide. I am therefore

<sup>25</sup> Vol. I, Chap. III, « En el que Periquillo describe su tercera escuela y la disputa de sus padres sobre ponerlo a oficio » -- Chap. XIV : Critica Periquillo los bailes y hace una larga y útil digresión hablando de la mala educación que dan muchos padres a sus hijos »...

<sup>26</sup> « Esta carta no hizo más efecto que entristecerme algunos ratos, pero sin profundizar sus verdades en mi corazón »...(p.233).

<sup>27</sup> « Por último : observad los consejos que mi padre me escribió en su última hora (...) y os quedan escritos en el capítulo XII del tomo I de la historia » (p.929).

<sup>28</sup> See one example amongst others : « No hijos, por Dios, no aumentéis el número de esos ingratos »...

able to say that Periquillo's spiritual will functions like knowledge that he inherited from his own father. I shall also add that both the utopian organization of the Society<sup>29</sup> and the divine order follow the pattern of the paternal figure, which explains the use of the terms « *Padre Amante* » (p. 870), « *Padre Celestial* » (p. 210) and « *Gran Padre de Familia* » to qualify God.

It is therefore not surprising to find a new series, that of the paternal figure's substitutes :

--the good master in Ch. III...

--San Francisco (210) and the Provincial father (Ch. XI)

--Antonio<sup>30</sup>

--the inn's owner, to whose care he entrusts the small fortune won in a lottery : the latter is not explicitly called father but functions as such as well through the advice and help he gives the narrator and through the emotional ties that they share.<sup>31</sup>

--the colonel<sup>32</sup>

--Limahotón who, in the same way as the inn's owner, refers to the paternal figure through the double indication of the paternal ties and the role of *protector* (p. 250) or *favorecedor* (p. 781)<sup>33</sup>.

--the new Martin Pelayo<sup>34</sup>

--the last master of Periquillo who is the spiritual son of Martin Pelayo (p. 862) and will act as a father to the narrator.

This same figure applies to other characters who don't implicate Periquillo; Antonio Sánchez' father is yet another paradigm of the same type<sup>35</sup> and after this latter had died, another one serves as a substitute for him<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> « Todos los individuos del cuerpo político deben reputarse en esta parte, hijos de un familia » (p. 284)

<sup>30</sup> « se hizo dueño de mi voluntad en términos que yo lo amaba y lo respetaba como a mi padre »...(p.414).

<sup>31</sup> « Yo me prendé de aquel hombre que tan bien me aconsejó sin interés; pero no trataba de admitir por entonces sus consejos »...(p.597).

<sup>32</sup> « llegué a querer y respetar el coronel como a mi padre y él llegó a corresponder a mi afecto con el amor de tal » (674); « Tales eran los consejos que frecuentemente me daba el coronel quien a un tiempo era mi jefe, mi amo, mi padre, mi amigo, mi maestro bienhechor »...(686).

<sup>33</sup> « Desde entonces me trató el isleño con el mayor cariño » (741).

<sup>34</sup> « En el confesionario, soy tu Padre » (861).

<sup>35</sup> « Mi buen padre no perdonó fatiga, gasto ni cuidado para suplir esta falta (of the mother E.C.) y así (...) pasé mi puerilidad con aquella alegría propia de la edad, sin dejar de aprender aquellos principios de religión, urbanidad y primeras letras en que no se descuidó de instruirme mi amante padre, con aquel esmero y cariño con que se tratan por los buenos padres los primeros y únicos hijos » (p.363).

<sup>36</sup> « los favores que le debí a este mi nuevo padre, pues así lo amaba, y él me quiso como a su hijo » (367).

As opposed to this very model of intelligence and wisdom to which the lexical field of kindness and protection refers, on which are focused and regarded as sacred all the exemplary and didactic material, we find the cruel father (the misanthrope's father p. 888 and ff), devoid of sense (the *Trapiento's* father p. 572 and ff), who hits his children (Andrés' padrastro p. 511) or disinherits them (the *Trapiento's* father).

In a novel which strangely reminds us of *Guzmán of Alfarache*, where the story's discursive thread is constantly interrupted and overwhelmed by all kinds of considerations, the paternal figure and the *testamentary structure* which includes it both rebuild the textual coherence, a coherence where the romanesque and the didactic find strength and join up.

Thus, this series of paradigmatic types which develops within the diegesis is jointed amongst other things to the exemplary portrait of the father, a prop to social and moral order, whose presence is enough to compensate the mother's congenital weakness: <sup>37</sup> (p. 265) (about this notion of a good education, and criticism of female weakness, see ch. XIV, p. 264 and ff)

The practice of the last will and testament belongs to the wider context of preparation to death, and this explains why it is linked amongst other things to a certain number of situations and moods in the social imagination. Being the expression of truth par excellence, it constitutes the mythical spot of revelations, shows the depth and sincerity of feelings, acknowledges and makes up for injustice, rewards devotion, so that it enables us to bring to light the final toll of an existence, to different degrees but in a material and tangible manner.

It therefore implies some soul-searching and functions like the corollary of a general confession. No doubt this is how any autobiography appears and *a fortiori* a picaresque autobiography, but I am nevertheless surprised at the number of textual occurrences where this discursive pattern appears as such. Periquillo tells the story of his life many times, either to characters he has just met, or to old friends he happens to see again, and all these people tell him of their own life in return: we would need to give dozens of quotations.

<sup>37</sup> « Sin embargo Zaza vez deja de servir de cierto freno la presencia del padre pero si éste muere todo se acaba de perder. Roto el único dique que había, aunque débil, se sale de caja el río de las pasiones, atropellando con cuanto se pone por delante »... (P.265).

These micro-autobiographies come and complete the narrator's. They sometimes give a new version of it, either incomplete (p. 47) or untrue (p. 511). Lastly, Periquillo makes a general confession to Martín Pelayo, which lasts 7 days, and which we could theoretically imagine as being the plain copy of the novel (p. 859). To my idea, this phenomenon is slightly different from the *autobiography inside the autobiography* that we can find in other picaresque novels, (even if it does include it, for example in the case of Antonio Sánchez and the *Trapiento*).

What seems to repeat itself in the *Periquillo*, and this is where the difference lies, is not a type of discursive practice but the sign of its textual inscription, and this refers more directly to the same of confession. This particularity, or at least what seems to be one, obviously enters the semiotic text of the *testamentary structure* which we have just discovered and which it contributes to institute. This social practice, nevertheless, is not only transcribed; as I mentioned earlier, it forms the object of a calling into question. First, in its objectively most questionable aspects, i.e. either the poor functioning of the Institution (cf. the satire of the bad executors), or the practices which pervert it (cf. the judgment passed on the birthright p. 572 and ff). and this comes straight from the 18th century reformist literature viewpoint. I am particularly thinking of what it said about the social origins of a certain number of prelates and popes, of the archbishop of Maguncia in Germany, the son of a carter; of Benoit XI, son of a washerwoman; of Benoit XII, son of a miller, of Boniface VIII. These few, seemingly non-relevant examples, illustrate the assertion according to which « the manual works and poverty don't degrade the man neither keep him from getting the highest positions and responsibilities when his virtue and culture entitle him to them ». (p. 292).

This same idea is reproduced by Periquillo's father when he tries to convince his wife that social functions have to be shared out according to talents and abilities, and not to birth. (cf. Ch. IV, p. III). The theme of filiation is clearly indicated here, and in both cases, *in terms of rupture, i.e., in total opposition with the will practice*, which, is contrary, is meant to rebuild and pass on a continuity.

Apart from his last inheritance, which occurs after the narrator's reaching the status of *homo novus*, this coincidence, of the narrator's explicit opinion and the development of the diegesis which we have already studied, appears again in the fact that when



the narrator inherits a fortune by will and testament (from the colonel, for example), he loses it very soon in a shipwreck, an episode which is to be read like an epilogue and related to an exemplary antique illustration.<sup>38</sup>

This valorization of the paternal figure and its moral and spiritual responsibility, which coexists within the text with the rejection of the ancestry's social implications, bursts the *testamentary structure*. Thus it can no longer be considered as a plain reproduction made by the text of a discursive or even imaginary pattern. It is well-worth questioning this internal contradiction, first from a diachronic point of view and in comparison with what appears in the Spanish picaresque novels of the « Golden Era ».

In these, indeed, the novel's underlying vision of the family, whether in the *Lazarillo of Tormes* or the *Guzmán of Alfarache* or the *Buscón*, is that of lineage, ancestry, birth, either in the form of a counter-value or of an authentic value. In these three classics, the paternal figure is the negative of the social role that the contemporary society expects (disqualified, ignominious, and with no resources ↔ noble and rich *pater familias*.) Other aspects of these three classics announces the upheavals which are about to affect the family life. Whereas the hegemonic model of family life valorizes all transmissions (of title, possessions, positions), remembers its agrarian roots (through title), and its community functioning, the picaresque novel, as urban novel, ignores all that refers to land and country, only remembers the transmission of ignominy which it tries to rub out, shows the rupture of the family tie; this is how we have to understand the narrator's state of orphan, or the son denying his father, and most and foremost the part played by the uncles (Guzmán's, who denies him, Pablo's, who, as executioner, kills his own brother, or brother-in-law, the barber).

Through determinism, the concept of transmission survives merely in its negative aspect, which in return justifies it in the text's ideological space and thus reproduces the hegemonic model and its values.

<sup>38</sup> « ¿Qué suerte hubiera corrido Aristipo si cuando aportó a la isla de Rodas, habiendo perdido en un naufragio todas sus riquezas, no hubiera tenido otro arbitrio con qué sostenerse por sí mismo? Hubiera perecido; pero era un excelente geómetra y conocida su habilidad le hicieron tan buen acogimiento los isleños que no extranó ni su patria ni sus riquezas y en prueba de esto les escribió a sus paisanos estas memorables razones « Dad a vuestros hijos tales riquezas que no las pierdan aun cuando salgan desnudos de un naufragio » (p.284).

On the contrary, as far as the *Periquillo* is concerned, a new hegemonic model of the family is shaping up, which, contrary to what happens in the Golden Era novels, no longer appears through a counter-value but directly within the text. It also contrasts, point by point, with what had been produced by the feudal Social Formation. This new family is to have a cellular structure, turned towards the future. From this point of view, Periquillo's father's pieces of advice, which Periquillo takes up, are destined to; build up his children's future.<sup>39</sup> and to settle on them this middle welfare, (*medianía*) that squares with the political project of the Liberalism.<sup>40</sup> In this context, we shall easily understand that the individualism praised by the liberal bourgeoisie induces this same liberal bourgeoisie to fight with determination against birthright (cf. *supra*), and to bring discredit on transmission by will in favor of what is obtained by merit and work.<sup>41</sup>

It is indeed remarkable that, in his will, Periquillo says nothing about the material possessions he would bequeath to his wife and sons. The only beneficiaries mentioned are a certain number of « decents, virtuous and married poors » (« pobres decentes, hombres de bien y casados »). It is nevertheless wellworth reminding the measures taken by the testator, in so far as they revive the topic of charity which appears in the 16th century Europe and which is more or less revealed in the *Guzmán of Alfarache* and the *Lazarillo of Tormes*. This question was reactivated in the 18th century Spain and is based on the distinction between the *pobre fingido* (simulated poor), *pobre legítimo* (legitimate) and *pobres vergonzosos* (ashamed). Periquillo adds another two parameters to these two traditional criteria : the beneficiaries of his legacy must be married and have either a profession or a talent.<sup>42</sup> To tell the truth, they

<sup>39</sup> « Yo os aseguro que seréis más felices que vuestro padre »... (p.930).

<sup>40</sup> « Pasado este cruel invierno, todo ha sido primavera, viviendo juntos vuestra madre yo y vosotros, y disfrutando de una paz y de unos placeres inocentes en una medianía honrada que, sin abastecerme para superfluidades, me ha dado todo lo necesario para no desear la suerte de los señores ricos y potentados » (p.913).

<sup>41</sup> « sé económica y no desperdicias en bureos lo que yo te dejo ni lo que tu marido adquiera » p.928).

<sup>42</sup> « certificación del cura de su parroquia en que conste son hombres de conducta arreglada, legítimos pobres, con familias pobres que sostener, con algún ejercicio o habilidad » (p.925).



are in fact not donations but interest free loans to help the beneficiaries set up, and which they will have to repay as soon as possible so that the sums put into circulation may be used under similar conditions by other beneficiaries. The clauses of the narrator's will constitute the taking shape of a state banking system according to a thinking which concerns economics more than charity. Indeed these lucky beneficiaries, however poor and deserving, will have to find citizens liable to stand surety for them and who will have to repay the advanced sums should their protégé misappropriate the funds<sup>43</sup>. No need to stress the significance of these two new parameters (existence of a family, guarantee of professional success). This project of a social organization destined to promote arts, crafts and trade in order to enable the most deserving fringe of the small people to live reasonably comfortably confirms what I have said about the new family.

With these remarks and in their light, we may get on to the general significance of the narrator's trajectory as well as on to its relation to the situation at his time. We did meanwhile note that, except for what happens after his « conversion », Periquillo very quickly loses all his fortunes, whether big or small, which were attributed to him by a stroke of luck (when he wins on the lottery) or by will. This seems to prove that « *bien non acquis ne profite jamais* ». This reading of the autobiographic fable which I am proposing is confirmed by an epilogue inserted in the second part of the novel. It shows a selfish merchant refusing to get rid of his fortune during the wreckage of the ship he is aboard. In the same way as all the other passengers of the ship he will have to throw his possessions overboard, and, then only, the ship and its occupants are saved. These two versions of the same theme most clearly indicate that money is not only an obstacle in the way to salvation but also and mainly to the success and happiness of the individual. In order to illustrate this assertion, the colonel tells his protégé a fable in which two young people are confronted, one is rich, the other poor<sup>44</sup>. Let the rich one lose his fortune and he is poorer than the poor one. This fable is only inserted in the colonel's speech in order to justify the physiocratic theories<sup>45</sup>. According to this

<sup>43</sup> « y, a más de esto, con fianza de un sujeto abonado que asegure con sus bienes responder por mil pesos que se le entregarán para que los gire y busque su vida con ellos, bien entendido de que el fiador será responsable a dicha cantidad siempre que se le pruebe que su ahijado la ha mal versado » (p.926).

<sup>44</sup> « y el muchacho que nació pobre es más rico que el que lo fue, como que su subsistencia no la mendiga de una fortuna accidental sino del trabajo de sus manos » (703).

<sup>45</sup> « pero me agrada mucho el pensamiento de los que han probado que no consisten las riquezas en la plata, sino en las producciones de la tierra, en la industria y en el trabajo de sus habitantes (...) Si la felicidad y la abundancia no viene del campo, dice un sabio inglés, es en vano esperar de otra parte » (701).

theory, the colonel considers that the mines of precious metal discovered in the New World are prejudicial to it<sup>46</sup>. As soon as a mine is opened, craftsmen become scarce<sup>47</sup>, peasants abandon their land<sup>48</sup>, the poor young people no longer learn a trade<sup>49</sup>. We shall remember that Periquillo's father wants his son to learn a trade precisely because he is poor<sup>50</sup>. It appears clearly that it is quite impossible to consider unmarked this preoccupation of the narrator's father, his pleas for the dignity of labor which he considers as being the only authentic and stable fortune although he expresses himself in other terms. When compared with the colonel's economist discourse, these pleas, on the contrary, appear as being the expression of a well-argued thought; this discursive element functions within a general conception which neglects the moral implications of idleness to the benefit of economics, and the individual to the benefit of the community.<sup>51</sup> Thus, while weaving together the discursive thread of the diegesis and the whole of its presumed digressions the text builds semantic equivalences between values of different kinds and origins around a conceptual axis with contradictory polarities (transmission ↔ acquisition). This axis relates the discovering of precious metal mines to nobiliary ancestry from which would ensue, on one hand and in the short-term, outrageous privileges and illusory advantages, and, on the other hand, a series of reverses of fortune in the long-term.

<sup>45</sup> « pero me agrada mucho el pensamiento de los que han probado que no consisten las riquezas en la plata, sino en las producciones de la tierra, en la industria y en el trabajo de sus habitantes (...) Si la felicidad y la abundancia no viene del campo, dice un sabio inglés, es en vano esperar de otra parte » (701).

<sup>46</sup> « es en mi entender una de las peores plagas que puede padecer un reino; porque esta riqueza que para el común de los habitantes es una ilusión agradable, despierta la codicia de los extranjeros y enerva la industria y laborio de los naturales » (Ibid.).

<sup>47</sup> « o si hay algunos, se hacen pagar con exorbitancia su trabajo » (702).

<sup>48</sup> « o porque se dedican al comercio de metales o porque no hay jornaleros suficientes para el cultivo de la tierra » (Ibid.).

<sup>49</sup> « ...no se dedican ni los dedican sus padres a aprender ningún oficio contentándose con enseñarlos a acarrear metales o a espulgar las tierras, que vale tanto como enseñarlos a ser ociosos » (Ibid.).

<sup>50</sup> « Mi padre (...) considerando que era viejo y pobre, quería ponerme a oficio porque decía que en todo caso más valía que fuera yo mal oficial que buen vagabundo »... (p.106).

<sup>51</sup> « Esta misma comparación hago entre un reino que se atiene a sus minas y otro que subsiste por la industria, agricultura y comercio... (703) » « Muchas naciones han sido y son ricas sin tener una mina de oro o plata y con su industria y trabajo saben recoger en sus senos el que se extrae de las Américas »...

In this context, the autobiographic text is the vector of an economic conception that we must illustrate. The colonel himself keeps his opinions free of moral or senequist interpretation. To fight against monetarism, he tells Periquillo, does not mean to preach the contempt for wealth.

Let's not be hypocrites, like Seneca, who at the same time praised poverty and « enjoyed big unearned incomes » (p. 705). This is why, he adds « I don't ask you to despise the wealthies ». This is when the fictive publisher finds it necessary to intervene, when he points out, as though it were indispensable : « In this way, the colonel means that he is not speaking about evangelical poverty ». This corresponds to the contents of the peroration of Periquillo's protector. « I advise you not to think that happiness lies in the wealthies but on the other hand I advise you to work in order to subsist and to look for and to be content with the middle welfare that is the best social condition for living peacefully. » (p. 706)

But, as I pointed out, the individual problem is conceived merely as the illustration of a society and nation-wide problem. Thus, the fable of *the Poor and the Rich* is only told in order to explain more clearly what is happening for Spain and its colonies.<sup>52</sup> Whereas England, Holland and Asia have become prosperous countries, without one single silver or gold mine « numerous politicians think that the decline of the (Spain's) industry, agriculture (...) trade, proceeds from his colonies' wealthies ». (p. 703). America's prosperity implies the rupture with the economic circuits in use, i.e., the exhaustion of the wealth of the mines from which should ensue an autarkical way of life, an autarky which should allow the development of industry, agriculture and crafts in the colonies.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> « Esta misma comparación hago entre un reino que se atiene a sus minas y otro que subsiste por la industria, agricultura y comercio. Este siempre florecerá y aquél caminará a su ruina por la posta ».

<sup>53</sup> « la dichosa pobreza alejaría de nuestras costas las embarcaciones extranjeras que vienen en pos del oro a vendernos lo mismo que tenemos en casa » (703), « Y sus naturales, precisados por la necesidad, fomentáramos la industria en cuantos ramos de la vida la divide el lujo o la comodidad de la vida; ésta sería bastante para que se aumentaran los labradores y artesanos, de cuyo aumento resultarían infinitos matrimonios que ahora son inútiles y vagos (...); los preciosos efectos que cuasi privativamente ofrece la Naturaleza a las Américas en abundancia tales como la grana, algodón, azúcar, cacao etc...serían otros tantos renglones riquísimos que convidarían a las naciones a entablar con ellas un ventajoso y activo comercio y finalmente un sinnúmero de circunstancias que precisamente debían enlazarse entre sí » (704).

This quotation calls for several comments.

1) The colonel describes a colonial economic circuit to which he opposes, thanks to the evocation of an autarkical organization, a future founded on an economic independence although he doesn't consider the possibility of a political rupture with Spain.<sup>54</sup> We may be surprised at the narrator's degree of awareness, and note the obvious contradiction between this lucid analysis of the colonial structure (even though the effects are not explicitly related to the causes) and his refusal to take a stand on insurrection,<sup>55</sup> whereas in his will, Periquillo's father asks his children to respect the established authorities.(p. 231)

2) It nevertheless remains true that this colonial structure is described in its perverse effects and that the narrator hopes it will be abolished.

3) Somewhere in the genetics of the text, the description of this perversity coincides with the rejection of the nobiliary ancestry and the process of transmission. This brings to light a whole chain of significances which relates several semantic trajectories to one another, and according to which the autobiographic confession merely appears as the vector of a discourse which goes beyond it. Each time this discourse emerges in the text, it seems to correspond to a semiotic whole where the problematization of the *testamentary structure* is related to anything concerning the Father-Mother and family relationships. Thus it is quite relevant that the increase in the number of marriages is what the colonel considers the first beneficial effect of what can be expected from the new economic order which he hopes for.

4) As we have just noticed, this new order is built on a three-step process :

- a) the rupture with the former order
- b) the autarky which enables to conquer and control its production
- c) the authentic insertion in international trade and on an equal footing with its partners. This means that it is possible to go into

<sup>54</sup> « harían el reino y su metrópoli más ricos (...) que lo han sido desde la época de los Corteses y Pizarros »... (704).

<sup>55</sup> « es muy peligroso escribir sobre esto y en México en el año de 1813 »... (920).



trade providing it is done freely and with the necessary means for this freedom. Independence must not be mistaken for self government. Autonomy must be *gained*, through industry and labour before any contract may be passed. As opposed to the colonial structure which maintains the people's *passivity*, the colonel pleads for the realm of India to take its destiny in hand and gain the instruments of action. Thus I am able to notice that the conceptual opposition between *Transmission* and *Acquisition* that we noted in the will structure is lined or projects itself in another opposition, whose emergence allows us to specify the former and its field of applications, and where the conquest of the *Act* is opposed to *Passivity*.

I must now return to the autobiographic anecdote in order to show how it is articulated, more deeply in the text. In order to follow the way it is articulated, I shall resort to Gerard Mendel's most suggestive studies. Let's consider once more the quarrel between Periquillo's mother and father concerning his future. The first projects herself in the context of the former hegemonic model of the family, built on the existence of close ties<sup>56</sup>. She overprotects her son, hence her responsibility in the moral and material decline of the latter.<sup>57</sup> Thus she extends Periquillo's dependency. (He will need other people to survive). The father's position on the matter is quite the opposite. His main concern is to make his son independent of the family<sup>58</sup>, and of society<sup>59</sup>.

In order to understand how far beyond the simple anecdote this quarrel is, which could hastily be considered as being a misogynous point of view, let's come back to the narrator's description of the maternal omnipotence, illustrated with the myth of Omphale. The aged Periquillo stigmatizes the castrating mother in these terms :

<sup>56</sup> « Dios no se muere; parientes tiene y padrinos que lo socorran; ricos hay en México harto piosos que lo protejan »...(115).

<sup>57</sup> « Ah, lágrimas de mi madre, vertidas por su culpa y por la mía. Si a los principios, si en mi infancia, si cuando yo no era dueño absoluto de los resabios de mis pasiones, me hubiera corregido los primeros ímpetus de ellas y no me hubiera lisonjeado con sus minos, consentimientos y cariños, seguramente yo me hubiera acostumbrado a obedecerla y respetarla »...(264).

<sup>58</sup> « ¿qué le darán sus parientes el día que lo vean sin oficio, muerto de hambre y hecho pedazos ? »(109).

<sup>59</sup> « quiere proporcionarle algún arbitrio útil y honesto para que solicite su subsistencia sin sobrecargar a la república de un ocioso más »(106).

It's good and right for the man to love his wife, and to grant her what is reasonable but not to admire her in such a way that in order to avoid offending her, he transgresses the fairness, rendering himself and his sons liable to the consequences of his unwise attachment, as it happened to me (...) don't be effeminate like this brave Hercules who (...) allowed himself to be reduced to slavery by his love for Omphale in such a way that this latter took off his lion's fur, dressed him up as a woman, set him to spin, and even scolded him for having broken some distaff or not doing the work she had ordered him to do (...) The women know perfectly how to take advantage of this foolish passion and try to rule over such faint husbands... » (p. 117)

When the narrator internalizes the maternal imagos, the image of the *Good Mother* who fulfills all desires is turned into the image of the *Bad Mother*, almighty and capricious :

« Then, they develop suddenly their inclinations to the dominations and every one of them is an Omphale and every one of the men a shameless queer Hercules. In this case, when the women do what they want to do, when they don't take the men into account, when they are unfaithful to them, when they give them orders, they insult them and even beat them as I often saw them to do it, they comply with their natural inclination and punish the vileness of their husbands and lovers ».(p. 117).

To my mind, this internalization of the « primary objectal relationship » explains the intratextual resort to the father's mediatory function, which alone can give the subject the means of its independence : « The paternal images », « the good paternal imago », corresponding to the Ego's ideal, is « that of a just, strong, free and benevolent father. Just means that he does not go beyond the limits of his rights : no arbitration. Strong means he has influence over things and people, without being omnipotent. Free, mainly in relation to the mother, i.e., independent of her power (See in G. Mendel, *La Révolte contre le Père*, Paris Payot 1969 p. 96). Faced with the mother's irrationality and capriciousness, Periquillo's father represents freedom, benevolence and wisdom (« He had a great experience of the world and perspicacious judgment » p. 116) although he did not manage to free himself from the woman's castrating power : « but these qualities usually disappeared because he gave in to my mother's caprices » (*ibid.*)

Contrary to what we could think at first, Periquillo does not change in order to identify himself with his father, but rather with the ideal father, and indeed, the internalization of these paternal images is at the origin of the sense production.



For Gerard Mendel, these paternal images are articulated with history within the sociogenesis of the unconscious. Thus the internalization of the paternal figure, whose evolution would be conveyed by what he calls the sociocultural institutions would have built the necessary conditions for the development of Science and Technology, i.e. for the development of the means of knowledge and rational action on the environment.<sup>22</sup> In these terms, the Age of Enlightenment and its exalting rationality, science and technology, which is the narrator's constant reference point, would express the impact of this evolution's outcome. From this viewpoint, the subject balances his relation to Mother Nature's omnipotence by establishing new relationships built on justice, i.e., on a set of rights and duties, and on his freedom. This kind of relationship is explicitly expressed in the *P.S.* :

« The mothers usually help the bad inclinations of their sons keeping the fathers from giving the *right punishment* » (p. 118).

« when I'll be dead, you'll have to manage yourself and subsist *by the sweat of your brow*; you'll be destroyed if you'll *trespass against this law...* » (p. 175).

The suggestive hypothesis of the author of *La Révolte contre le Père* makes it possible to bring to full light the coincidence between these various textual realizations in which are implied :

- a) economic conceptions and the critic expression of the colonial situation (cf. *supra*).
- b) what we have called the *testamentary structure*
- c) the problematic of the Father's identification.

These various realizations may indeed be reduced to a contradictory conceptual whole, which opposes the colonial and filial subjection--a factor of passivity where everything is granted--to the conquest of independence through the Act, which admits as only value what is gained. This long digression leads us to understand how, as symbols of Mother Nature's omnipotence, the gold and silver mines in India may be assimilated, within the text's ideological space, to domination tools, whose legacy must be rejected, which can only be a source of alienation. In the same way as free nations only may establish fair transactions between one another <sup>60</sup>, the son, after having been freed by the father's

<sup>60</sup> « convidarían a las naciones a entablar con ellas un ventajoso y activo comercio »...(704).

mediation, may hope for a reasonably comfortable life *at the expense* of his own efforts and labor. Thus we notice, that, whichever the viewpoint, the outcome is always the notion of a *contract*, a notion which is to be found in all individual and liberal 'thoughts and which always implies the autonomy of will (here, that of the colonies opposed to the *mother* country portrayed as a *castrating* mother).

The expression in the text of the *Periquillo Sarniento* of the liberal theories implies the mediation of the French physiocrats and Adam Smith. We would now study the *discursive marks* of this mediation. (antimercantilism, abolition of the obstacles hindering trade, exposure of the drawbacks due to the acquisition of colonies, exalting of individualism...).



## TOWARDS SOCIOLOGICAL SEMIOTICS

Peter V. Zima

Semiotics and sociology : because of the complexity of this synthesis, which has often been envisaged but never achieved, it seems useless to repeat what has been done in many lectures, talks and articles, and to submit to the reader another rapid sketch of the dazzling but unrealized possibilities.

In the present situation, where semioticians such as Prieto, Greimas and Eco, and sociologists such as Bourdieu and Habermas have tackled problems which imply a synthesizing approach because of their sociological and semiotic character, it seems more urgent *to specify the socio-semiotic project, to present as systematically as possible the different levels of synthesis and to give a few literary examples while putting the terminology into concrete form.*

It is quite obvious that these three complementary programmes cannot be realized in a conventional article which must not exceed a dozen typed pages. In order to avoid ending with an uncertain reasoning, I shall try to present the fundamental ideas in the form of *theses*. Such a presentation has the drawback of making a detailed analysis impossible ; on the other hand it enables me to give a more systematic clarification.

### 1) *The socio-semiotic project : The epistemological level.*

1.1. At present, any project of synthesis is bound to be merely a contingent one. In the presence of semiotics which are as heterogeneous as sociology, it seems indispensable to specify the semiotic current which is to be related to an existing sociological theory.



In the past, it was assumed that being eclectic was a way of embracing everything<sup>1</sup>. Nowadays, eclecticism haunts contemporary theory whose concepts are often too disparate to constitute a coherent whole. For example, the theory of ideology sketched by Eco in *A Theory of Semiotics* and elsewhere<sup>2</sup> suffers from its separation from sociology. The author omits confronting the existing concepts of ideology (Pareto, Marx, Mannheim, Althusser) and does not bother to consider the genesis and functioning of ideologies in modern society.

1.2. In order to avoid this type of conceptual flaw, it should be made clear that the project of synthesis as considered here finds its sociological and sociocritic starting point ("ideologiekritisch") in Horkheimer's, Adorno's and Habermas' latest theories which often focus on problems of language and communication. Although it is impossible to develop systematically the semiotic potential of the *Kritische Theorie*, this theory will supply the *relevance* in relation to which the semiotic concepts will be defined or re-defined in a sociological context.

1.3. On the semiotic side, it seems rather precarious to combine (as Eco does in his *Theory*) European and American terminologies without considering the socio-historical genesis and the epistemological status of the concepts in question. Being an offspring from Kantianism, and even more so from pragmatism, the Peircian semiotics, for example, seem incompatible with Prieto's or Kristeva's theories<sup>3</sup>, which center on variants of Kristeva's dialectical materialism; they are certainly incompatible with Althusser's theory of discourse, which Michel Pêcheux is trying to develop. It should of course be possible to actualize the concepts of Peirce or Morris which derive from 19th century American pragmatism; Karl Otto Apel tried to do so in his *Transformation der Philosophie* and in his works on Peirce<sup>4</sup>. But then it is necessary to redefine them within the new theoretical context in which they are projected. Within the context of the *Kritische*

<sup>1</sup> From the verb *eklegein* (to choose). Since Greek and Alexandrian antiquity eclecticism has suffered from abstraction in the dialectic (Hegelian) sense of the term. Its selections do not sufficiently take into account the origin, genesis and context of the concepts.

<sup>2</sup> See: U. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Press, 1975.

<sup>3</sup> See: L.J. Prieto, *Pertinence et pratique. Essai de sémiologie*, Paris, Minuit, 1975 et J. Kristeva, *Semiotike. Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, Paris, Seuil, 1969.

<sup>4</sup> See: K.O. Apel, *Der Denkweg des Charles S. Peirce. Eine Einführung in den amerikanischen Pragmatismus*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1975.

*Theorie* I shall try to redefine a certain number of semiotic concepts used by L.J. Prieto, A.J. Greimas and J. Kristeva, relying mainly on Greimas' theory which presents the advantage of relating the semantic level to that of the narrative syntax.

## 2) The lexical level

2.1. It is at the lexical level that the penetration of social reality into language may immediately be spotted. Modern sociolinguistics have often stressed the word's historical origin and social function. In spite of its elementary character, the thesis on the relation between words and social reality, which is to be found in one of Vladimir Skalička's essays, is more than a commonplace: "it is true that, in the lexicon, some words, (or rather lexical units) correspond to parts of reality. Lexical units, in most cases words such as *king*, *rich*, *empire*, *ministry*, *to arrest* are images of an extralinguistic reality, and, in this case, of a social reality"<sup>5</sup>.

In a rather different context, Michel Pêcheux draws our attention to the fact that words regularly are at stake in social battles: "class struggle often boils down to the fight for one word against another"<sup>6</sup>. Long before Pêcheux and the Althusserians, Bakhtin and Voloshinov stressed the ideological connotations of linguistic signs. These are not neutral, and contrary to what Saussure's synchronic linguistics would like to make us believe, the subjects do not use them in a purely grammatical and technical context: "The ideological sphere coincides with that of signs: they correspond to one another. Where the sign is to be found, we also find ideology. Anything ideological has a semiotic value"<sup>7</sup>. In a lexicological perspective opened by A.J. Greimas and Georges Matoré, the latter analyses the social and economic genesis of the vocabulary in the society under Louis Philippe<sup>8</sup>.

2.2. We shall see later, when tackling the concept of sociolect, how lexical units can acquire a symptomatic character which enables us to recognize and distinguish group languages. Adjectives such as "revisionist", "reactionary" and "internationalist" announce a (collective) Marxist-Leninist language which distinguishes itself,

<sup>5</sup> V. Skalička, "Hranice sociolingvistiky", in: *Slovo a slovesnost*, 2, XXXVI, 1975, p. 113.

<sup>6</sup> M. Pêcheux, *Les Vérités de La Palice*, Paris, Maspero, 1975, p. 194.

<sup>7</sup> M.M. Bakhtine (V.N. Volochinov), *Le Marxisme et la philosophie du langage. Essai d'application de la méthode sociologique en linguistique*, Paris, Minuit, 1977, p. 27.

<sup>8</sup> See: G. Matoré, *Le Vocabulaire et la société sous Louis-Philippe*, Genève, Droz, 1951.

at every level, from a liberal language or from that of *Critical Theory*. But it is on the lexical level that the particularities and differences appear. At the semantic and (macro-) syntactic levels, only a systematic and detailed analysis may bring them to light.

2.3. Although the "vocabulary" has an important empirical and "symptomatic" function, when it comes to recognizing and distinguishing a group language, it is impossible to limit socio-semiotic research to the lexical field. It is indeed at the semantic level that we must try to represent the articulation of (social) collective interests as being a structured and structuring activity. Greimas himself considers that, at present, his lexicological project is out-stripped by structural semantics. « The development of the methods of semic analysis (in France) or componential analysis (in the States) tends to turn lexicology into lexical semantics, with mainly taxonomic preoccupations »<sup>9</sup>.

### 3) The semantic level

3.1. The semantic level is quite fundamental, for at this level collective interests make their way into the *langue* which is not a static system but a compound of historical structures whose transformations are closely related to social interests and struggles. Fighting for words would be senseless if words were isolated units with no semantic and pragmatic relation to other lexical units. Indeed the fact that words belong to pre-established *classes* and may always be classified differently explains the impact of lexical struggles. Any attempt to classify or re-classify language units implies, as far as politics, economics, religion, law, as well as social sciences are concerned, that the individual and the community resort to a particular *relevance* which is never that of a whole society or culture.

3.2. Discussing *semantic relevance*, Prieto notes quite rightly that, as *point of view*, it corresponds to social and class interests. Following Marx and Althusser, he also reveals that the dominant groups try to present their relevance as being natural, self-evident, and thus hide its particular and instrumental, historical character: "although the point of view from which results the relevance of a way of knowing material reality is not acceptable for all members of the same society because it privileges some members of this society at the expense of others, the privileged, of course, have a vested interest in obscuring this point of view and in showing the knowledge

<sup>9</sup> A.J. Greimas, J. Courtès, *Sémiotique. Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*, Paris, Hachette, 1979, p. 209.

in question as being imposed by material reality itself"<sup>10</sup>. As any type of classification is closely related to the point of view according to which a part of reality is classified, we shall easily recognize the close relationship between relevance and classification. All classification goes hand in glove with the point of view and the relevance of a particular social community which can only articulate its interests by accepting as relevant certain classification criteria, and as non-relevant certain others. As far as sociology is concerned, Pierre Bourdieu tends to confirm Prieto's theses when he shows the social background of the classification. In *Ce que parler veut dire* he writes about a "whole compound of differences significantly related to social differences which, although negligible for the linguist, are relevant for the sociologist because they fall into a system of linguistic oppositions which is the *retranslation* of a system of social differences"<sup>11</sup>. Let us note that the sociologist and the semiotician agree that there is no neutral objective (classification) relevance in the sphere of social sciences. The obliteration, for which objectivist and formalist linguistics are responsible, is also an ideological blunder (see below).

3.3. What has been said up to now makes a sociological representation of the *code* concept possible. As the result of a classification process or of a "taxonomic activity" (see Greimas), the code may be defined as a *system of oppositions, distinctions and definitions*. Although he criticizes the desemantization of the code concept (calling the latter a "fetish") and tries to classify the various codification methods (paleographic, institutional, correlational code), Umberto Eco hardly manages to specify the concept and to relate it to the articulation of social interests<sup>12</sup>. In this context the semantic code should be defined not only as a more or less coherent and hierarchically organized totality of classes, whose oppositions and distinctions express particular interests; it should be conceived as a system of classes in which each class constitutes a *semantic isotopy*, as defined by Greimas<sup>13</sup>. Only when the oppositions and distinctions of the code are considered as oppositions and distinctions between isotopies will it be possible to

<sup>10</sup> L.J. Prieto, op. cit., p. 162.

<sup>11</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Ce que parler veut dire*, Paris, Fayard, 1982, p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> See: U. Eco, *Semiotica e filosofia del linguaggio*, Torino, Einaudi, 1984, p. 255-302, in particular the section called: "Codice e enciclopedia".

<sup>13</sup> *Isotopie*: [...] l'itérativité, le long d'une chaîne syntagmatique, de classèmes qui assurent au discours-énoncé son homogénéité." (A.J. Greimas, J. Courtès, op. cit., p. 197).



define the concept and avoid its progressive desemantization through ideology and commercial misuse.

#### 4) The syntactic and narrative levels

4.1. The social neutrality of the sentence is just as mythical as that of the isolated word. It is not a coincidence if the romantics tried to deliver the words from syntactic restraint. It is not a coincidence either if Maurras' critique of romanticism aimed, amongst other things, at the integrity of the syntagm. According to Maurras, the 1830 current "put the *Word* on a throne... and drove away beauty in favour of beauties..."<sup>14</sup>. To his mind, *beauty* lies in the perfect sentence which, a lot later but in a polemic just as virulent as Maurras', the Marxist-Leninists will defend against the experiments of the surrealist avant-garde. Although in the past the sentence has been at stake in aesthetic and hence in ideological and political battles, it is not possible to limit socio-semiotic and socio-linguistic research to the field of phrastic syntax.

4.2. It is indeed beyond the sentence that semantic oppositions and distinctions come to the fore. In itself, a sentence such as "the Bolshevik party won the victory in 1917" is as neutral as a word in a dictionary so long as it is not inserted into a transphrastic context: into that of discourse. Within the practice of discourse the function of the "Bolshevik party" will be defined in relation to semantic classes, in relation to the oppositions and distinctions which constitute the *code*, i.e. the foundation of a particular discourse. Within a discourse, the party will appear as a positive or negative force, salutary or harmful, bureaucratic or anti-bureaucratic, necessary or superfluous. It will appear as a narrative instance whose abilities and actions are defined in relation to the oppositions and distinctions of the code and in relation to the *deep structure* (fundamental opposition) which organizes the whole semantic universe of the discourse. Thus the semantic base determines the distribution of the "roles" of discourse and their functioning in a dramatic process. In this context, one understands why M.A.K. Halliday writes, in *Language as Social Semiotic*: "within the linguistic system, it is the *semantic system* that is of primary concern in a sociolinguistic context"<sup>15</sup>. One also

<sup>14</sup> C.H. Maurras, in G. Matoré, op. cit., p. 150.

<sup>15</sup> M.A.K. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic. The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*, London, Edward Arnold, 1978, p. 111.

understands why those amongst the discourse theoreticians who separate macrosyntactic description from semantic analysis will end, whether they like it or not, by obscuring the social implications of the linguistic structure. To my mind, Nicolas Ruwet is correct in saying about Zelig Harris' traditional discourse analysis that "Harris deliberately leaves aside all semantic and especially pragmatic considerations"<sup>16</sup>. On the basis of what has been said so far, we must add: Harris must offend against the pragmatic and social aspects of discourse because he misses out the semantic stage.

4.3. Unlike Harris' approach, which was developed in the fifties, that of Greimas aims at examining the relationship between the socio-semantic base of discourse and the distribution of its actantial functions: of the "dramatic roles" of discourse conceived as a narrative structure. One of the main assets of Greimas' structural semantics consists in having demonstrated that even non-fictional discourses (political, theoretical, juridical) have an actantial structure whose dramatic and polemic character expresses social antagonisms. Just like literary or mythical texts, political, philosophical or scientific discourses have their heroes and anti-heroes, helpers and opponents. Their syntagmatic functions are to be understood only when related to the paradigmatic and semantic structure of discourse. This is what Greimas means when he notes: "Within the syntagmatic scheme, these paradigmatic units organize the text and in a way constitute its framework"<sup>17</sup>. Stemming from a particular relevance and a particular classification, the semantic structure determines the distribution of the *actantial roles*: i.e. of the function of "Bolshevik party" in a discourse concerning the 1917 revolution, of the function of "truth" in a philosophical or scientific discourse, of "limited company" in a juridical discourse<sup>18</sup>. Considering that *actants* may be subjects or objects, individuals or collectives (political parties, for example), abstracts or concrete entities (theories or theoreticians), it is impossible to identify the concept of actant to that of character. Due to its abstraction (compensated by the concept of actor)<sup>19</sup>, it makes possible the — anthropomorphic and "dramatic" — narrative representation of the most abstract discourse. In social sciences, the

<sup>16</sup> N. Ruwet, "Parallélismes et déviations en poésie" in: *Langue, discours société. Pour Emile Benveniste*, Paris, Seuil, 1975, p. 310.

<sup>17</sup> A.J. Greimas, "Les Acquis et les projets", in: J. Courtés, *Introduction à la sémiotique narrative et discursive*, Paris, Hachette, 1976, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> See: A.J. Greimas, "Analyse sémiotique d'un discours juridique", in: A.J. Greimas, *Sémiotique et sciences sociales*, Paris, Seuil, 1976.

<sup>19</sup> See: J. Courtés, 1976, pgs. 95-96. An *actant* may express himself in the discourse through various *actors*, and conversely, an actor may appear as the syncretism of several *actants*.



ideological character of the scientific discourse manifests itself at the level of actantial structure. Dealing with the scientific project of social sciences, Greimas writes: "Like any other human project, the latter can only be ideological: we implicitly accepted this when we proposed giving an actantial structure to the subjective instance within scientific speech."<sup>20</sup>

### 5) The pragmatic level: the sociolect

5.1. At present, it seems possible to return to the second section where the collective language, the language of a particular group, recognizable by its lexical repertoire, is dealt with. The theses advanced in the previous sections enable us to define the group language, i.e. the sociolect, at the lexical, the semantic and the discourse (narrative) level.

5.2. Any social community, be it political, religious or professional, uses a particular vocabulary which distinguishes it from other linguistic groupings. At the same time it organizes its lexical repertoire in relation to a particular code (a classification system) which excludes the relevance and taxonomy that another group may have adopted. Therefore it seems quite precarious to assume that a semantic or cultural code applies to a whole society, just as it is precarious to assume the existence of a homogeneous ideology valid for a whole society. Just as doubtful as this global assumption is Greimas' hypothesis according to which sociolects are mainly professional languages, "specialized languages"<sup>21</sup> stemming from "secondary socialization". For the Catholic, Protestant, liberal, socialist, or communist vocabulary may play an important part in the "primary socialization" before school age. We should therefore take into account the interaction between professional, political, religious sociolects etc. Let us add that the sociolect's lexical dimension is negligible when compared to the semantic dimension. Even if we accept Greimas' idea that a specialized language includes "some three thousand lexemes"<sup>22</sup> we cannot maintain that the vocabulary as such may constitute a sociolect, a separate language. Indeed, the semantic structuring, the relevance, the classification and the codification confer upon the sociolect a unity quite separate from the *langue* and other collective languages. Following Lotman, one could say that the sociolect is a secondary or *derived modeling system*: within the context of a particular relevance and clas-

<sup>20</sup> A.J. Greimas, *Sémiotique et sciences sociales*, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 53-55.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

sification, many lexical units of the natural language acquire a secondary significance, grafted on to that of the common language. This is how the lexeme "cosmopolitan" takes on positive connotations in a liberal sociolect and may acquire a pejorative meaning in the Marxist-Leninist sociolect: it functions in a semantic code very different from the liberal code<sup>23</sup>.

5.3. The idea of a lexical repertoire and the idea of a semantic code are, in the case of the sociolect, mere sociological and semiotic hypotheses about reality. No discourse will realize all the lexical and semantic possibilities of its sociolect: it realizes part of them, and thus exhibits certain similarities with other discourses belonging to the same category. At the same time, it can contradict these discourses on certain points by putting forward certain semantic oppositions and distinctions rather than others: This is how one could explain the debates within one and the same sociolect — for example those between Christian Marxists and atheistic Marxists. At an empirical level, a sociolect appears as a set of discourses whose common denominator consists of a lexical repertoire and a semantic code.

### 6) The concept of ideology

6.1. The sociological debate on ideology is long, confused and prolific. It has generated numerous "definitions" of ideology, a dozen of which are surveyed by Rossi-Landi<sup>24</sup>. At the risk of contributing to the conceptual proliferation, I shall offer a re-definition of this concept at the level of discourse. Such a re-definition should lead to a more concrete and precise application of the notion of ideology in literary analysis. Its starting point is the sociological debate which, despite its contradictions, twists and turns, makes it possible to distinguish two fundamental conceptions. The first, stemming from Mannheim's "Sociology of Knowledge", tends to assume that any discourse is ideological (including the Marxist discourses); the second aims at distinguishing a critical or scientific knowledge from an ideological or false knowledge. In my opinion the contradiction between these two conceptions is merely apparent.

6.2. First, we could define ideology as being a narrative structure deriving from a sociolect and thus from a particular code and lexical repertoire. In so far as the juridical, historical, political and economic discourses, as well as those of social sciences articulate

<sup>23</sup> See: D. Reboul, *Langage et idéologie*, Paris, PUF, 1980, p. 66.

<sup>24</sup> See: F. Rossi-Landi, *Ideologia*, Milano, Isedi, 1978, pp. 19-34.

collective interests and develop within particular sociolects, they may be described as *ideological*. The relevances and classifications of these discourses are not to be explained in relation to the objects they represent, but in relation to the interests and intentions of the individual or collective subjects responsible for them. Seen in this light, the text of the *Programme commun* of the French Left is not fundamentally different from a sociological, juridical, historical, economic or philosophical text. It seems important to defend this point against those who, like Hans Albert or Karl Popper, pretend they can separate ideological from scientific knowledge, which, according to Albert, should observe Weber's "Wertfreiheit" ("objectivity"): the relevance of all these psychological, sociological, or semiotic discourses results from certain particular interests which cannot be identified with those of society as a whole (on this subject, see Horkheimer's criticism)<sup>25</sup>.

6.3. If this general definition is not developed any further (ideology as the expression of collective interests) it might become ineffective. Thus, bearing in mind the arguments of the *Kritische Theorie*, it seems necessary to define *ideological discourse* as being the discourse of *false consciousness*. The idea of a false consciousness has been abandoned by very many theoreticians in a situation where the general definition (any discourse is ideological) tends to impose itself and to intimidate those who would like to go beyond ideology. Rather than being intimidated, one ought to distinguish the ideological from the theoretical or critical discourse. In the literary examples which will complete and illustrate the theoretical arguments, we shall see that the ideological discourse (like that of the fairy tale) is dualistic and that its semantic and actantial structure excludes ambiguity, ambivalence and indifference. The ideological discourse does not reflect on its structure and its historical genesis: it presents and conceives itself as natural, self-evident (see Prieto)<sup>26</sup>. In concrete terms, and in the context I have sketched here, this means it refuses to submit its relevance, its classifications (its code) and its narrative to criticism. Refusing to present its social contingency and its function in relation to *particular* interests, it *identifies itself* (Adorno) with all its referents. By this identification it monopolizes the definition of "reality" and excludes any open dialogue with other discourses:

<sup>25</sup> M. Horkheimer, "Diskussion zum Thema: Wertfreiheit und Objektivität," in: *Max Weber und die Soziologie heute*, Tübingen, Mohr, 1965.

<sup>26</sup> See: L.J. Prieto, op. cit., p. 160.

it is *monological*. Unlike the ideological discourse, the discourse of a critical theory accepts the ambivalence and calls into question the manichean scheme *hero/antihero, good/bad, just/unjust*, etc. It tries to reflect on its historical genesis and the social particularity (the "sociolectal" particularity) of its relevance and classifications. When reflecting on its particularity, it avoids monological identification: it makes possible an open dialogue with heterogeneous discourses (and sociolects) whose narratives generate different "effects of reality". It is obvious that the "open", reflexive and dialogical discourse will never completely elude ideology and false consciousness: when defending one pertinence and one classification against all others, it will always tend towards domination, dogmatism and closure. It is impossible to insert Althusser's "coupure épistémologique" between the critical discourse and that of ideology. To my mind the difference between these two types of discourse is essential: it lies in the attitude adopted by the *subject of discourse* towards its semantic, syntactic and narrative activity. We shall see that the attitude of the critical subject is very different from that of the ideological subject.

#### 7) Intertextuality: ideology and fiction

7.1. The ideological character of literary texts, their tendency to "reflect" ideology, their ability to criticize ideology and to reveal its deficiencies have often been discussed in the past. Unlike certain traditional Marxists such as Lukács, Pierre Macherey starts from the premise that, far from expressing a homogeneous authorial ideology, the literary text tends to expose the deficiencies of the latter<sup>27</sup>. Unfortunately, Macherey's metaphorical discourse, which focuses on the Marxist concept of "reflection", barely allows us to specify the relationship between text and ideology. How do ideologies manifest themselves within a text? What is their impact on the semantic and narrative structures of a novel? Macherey's Marxist criticism cannot answer these questions as it precludes a definition of text and ideology as semantic and narrative structures.

7.2. Once ideology has been described as a discourse structure, deriving from a particular sociolect, it seems possible to relate it to the text of a novel, a drama or a short story. As far as the theoretical metadiscourse is concerned, the tie between the fictional text and its social context is no longer "reflection" in the

<sup>27</sup> See: E. Balibar, P. Macherey, "Sur la littérature comme forme idéologique", in: *Littérature* 13, p. 39.



metaphorical sense but the concept of *intertextuality* as introduced by Julia Kristeva, who draws her inspiration from the dialogical theory developed by Mikhail Bakhtin's group. According to Bakhtin and Kristeva, the text, whether literary or not, is not a monad: it may always be read as a reaction or an answer to written or oral texts, to historical or contemporary texts which the author reads and to which he reacts. This kind of dialogue may take on the form of a pastiche, a parody, an open or latent polemic or a criticism. In the past, I tried to show how Musil's, Broch's and Svevo's novels, and more recently, Jürgen Becker's prose, are in fact pastiches, parodies and criticisms of ideological, scientific, commercial and other discourses<sup>28</sup>. Unlike concepts such as "reflection" or "homology" which allow for unrestrained speculation, the concept of intertextuality has an empirical dimension: it permits us to check the existence of certain sociolects and discourses within the fictional text.

7.3. Instead of stimulating speculations concerning analogies or "homologies", it invites the researcher to study the impact of the absorbed, pastiche, parodied or criticized ideological discourses on the semantic and narrative structures of the literary text. Hence the concept of intertextuality is not a fashionable notion meant to replace the philological (respectable) theories of quotation: for the theories of quotation do not attempt to explain the relationship between the structure of the quoted text and that of the "quoting" literary text. The concept of quotation remains empirical and even nominalist, whereas the concept of intertextuality aims at the structures and their interaction. Before ending this study, I should like to illustrate these theorems with three examples which should shed some light on this interaction. In order to simplify (or maybe oversimplify), I shall only deal with ideological discourses in literature and omit analyzing non-ideological discourses. There are dealt with in some of my other works<sup>30</sup>.

#### 8) Musil

8.1. *The man without qualities* has often been read as a criticism of ideology ("Ideologiekritik"). Numerous are the authors who have

<sup>28</sup> See: P.V. Zima, "Vom Nouveau Roman zu Jürgen Beckers Prosa", in: P.V.Z. *Roman und Ideologie*. München, Fink, 1986

<sup>29</sup> The concept of homology introduced by L. Goldmann leaves too much room for a speculation which follows the path of analogy.

<sup>30</sup> In *L'Ambivalence romanesque*, for example, the aim is to render the function of social conversation in Proust's *Recherche* (Paris, Le Sycomore, 1980).

drawn our attention to the parodies of fascist, conservative, clerical or socialist discourses. In his notes on the novel, Musil himself tells us that he intended to expose the various ideologies in a critical light. We could thus read *The man without qualities* as a critical reaction to various ideological sociolects of the time. It is not sufficient to analyze the political "ideas" in the novel; the structure of the absorbed discourses and their structural function within the text of the novel have to be dealt with.

8.2. In Musil, the criticism of ideology resembles that of a critical theory as outlined earlier on; like theory, the critical novel questions the dualism of the ideological discourse as well as its inability to reveal its historical genesis and its social contingency. In a chapter entitled "Conversations with Schmeisser", a liberal discourse, that of the narrator, is opposed to the socialist discourse of a young militant. To the dualistic and manichean schemes of the militant, the narrator opposes the ambivalence, the paradox and irony (which are also characteristic of Adorno's *Kritische Theorie*): "In that case I maintain that you will fail for other reasons", added Ulrich with a smile, "for example for the reason that each one of us is capable of calling someone a cur although we like our dog better than our neighbour?" Schmeisser felt better when, in a mirror, he saw the image of a young man wearing heavy glasses under a wilful forehead. He thought it unnecessary to reply<sup>31</sup>. The ideological discourse which "possesses" the truth by identifying itself with reality, replies with a repressive silence to ambivalence and open dialogue. On a structural level, this silence corresponds to the monological closure of the dualistic discourse whose subject dogmatically defines Good and Evil, Hero and Villain. Its relevance and classifications have been established once and for all; they cannot become the topic of open discussion and critical reflection.

8.3. Musil's writing can be considered as a reaction to the ideological dualism which forms the basis of a monological and closed story. In opposing ideology and its dualistic actantial systems (Hero/Anti-Hero, Helper/Opponent), Musil developed an essayistic and open form of writing geared towards irony and dialogue. His criticism of ideological discourse nevertheless reaches deadlock. How is it possible to write a novel and assert at the same time, as Musil does, that when you attempt to describe reality pretending that it is univocal and transparent, you necessarily fall into the ideological

<sup>31</sup> R. Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Reinbek, Rowohlt, 1978, p. 1457.



trap? Is it possible to write a (traditional) novel taking into account the ambivalence of characters, actions, situations and words? In attempting to answer these questions, Musil was obliged to write a fragmentary "essayistic" novel, whose open-endedness corresponds to his will to take into account the ambivalence and elude the influence of ideology: of its semantic dualism and narrative closure.

#### 9) Moravia

9.1. It is particularly interesting to note that, in another novel, *Gli indifferenti* by Alberto Moravia, ideology, as a dualistic discourse and actantial scheme, takes on a similar function. The defenders of a humanist discourse (whose origin in a particular sociolect is not mentioned) try to explain the hero's (Michele Ardengo's) actions within a rigid actantial scheme based on semantic dichotomies such as Good/Bad, Virtue/Vice, Courage/Cowardice, etc.

9.2. The narrator's discourse nevertheless reveals the hero's complete indifference towards the ideological relevance and the classifications it entails. Michele's attempt to kill his rival, the rich Leo Merumeci, is bound to fail because of his own indifference which makes him incapable of hating his opponent. He forgets to load his revolver and is disarmed by Leo. But before his defeat, he imagines his trial after the successful murder. During these imaginary proceedings, the opposition between the protagonist's indifference and the ideological dualism comes to the fore. The barrister's and public prosecutor's discourses present Michele as a positive or negative *actant* (hero or anti-hero), starting from certain semantic oppositions such as honour/infamy, virtue/vice, being/seeming, etc. "Are you going to condemn Michele for having avenged the honour of his offended and trampled family?"<sup>32</sup> This rhetorical question by the barrister shows the manichean structure of the entire discourse which at once excludes Michele's ambivalence and indifference.

9.3. It is nevertheless Michele's indifference towards all the ideological relevances and classifications which explains why, in Moravia's novel, the ideological discourse sounds hollow. Michele's monologue reveals the contingency of this discourse. The arbitrary character of its relevance and of its taxonomies: "there, I killed Leo with no hatred, cold-bloodedly... without feeling anything sincere... I could have told him with the same indifference 'Congratulations, Carla is a pretty girl'... This is my real crime...

I was too indifferent"<sup>33</sup>. In conclusion we may note that the indifference which reveals the contingency of the ideological relevance acquires wit Moravia, as later on with Camus, a critical function: it questions the rigid actantial schemes underlying the ideologist's discourses.

#### 10) Camus

10.1. If one compares Camus' *The Outsider* to Moravia's *Gli Indifferenti* one notices that, at certain points, when Meursault is taken to court, his case is very similar to Michele's imaginary trial. Like Michele, Meursault is a non-subject, an indifferent character who refuses to moralize language and load it with ideological relevance. In recent works, I tried to develop this idea in a narrative context and to show that Meursault has no *narrative programme*. Being merely an apparent subject, or non-subject, he may be integrated into any programme: for example, into that of Raymond, the procurer, who asks him if he would like "to be his friend". Meursault's indifference (his non-relevance) enables him to become *anybody's* helper (Greimas) and to be integrated into *any* narrative programme. Being a non-subject, Meursault is finally the victim of nature's fate (of the fatal collusion between *water* and *sun*). It is not an ideological motive (racism, religious or political fanaticism) which leads to the Arab's murder but fate, indifferent and natural.

10.2. To the representatives of justice, who use the vocabulary and the semantics of a humanist-Christian sociolect, Meursault's indifference is just as unacceptable as his non-subjectivity. The magistrate and the public prosecutor refuse to believe in the fatality that Meursault claims. Instead of seeing in him the indifferent individual, the non-subject with no narrative programme, they present him to the public as a responsible and punishable subject, thus confirming Louis Althusser's idea that "ideology appeals to the individual as a subject". At the actantial level, the court, Meursault's antagonist, refuses to admit that nature is the hero's real indifferent and non-social driving force. It substitutes cultural evil for nature, and acts itself in the name of good and Christian-humanist morals.

10.3. In *The Outsider* we are confronted with two incompatible discourses: the first is the indifferent and "natural" discourse of

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, p. 277.

the narrator (Meursault) ; the second is that of the court and the justice, the ideological and dualistic discourse of judges and barristers. It is a linguistic structure which the subject of discourse presents as being natural and true to "reality". It is constantly challenged by the narrator's indifferent language which is very similar to Michele's in Moravia's novel. The opposition between these two discourses (the discourse of indifference and that of ideology) explains the novel's bipartition : the first part is dominated by indifference and natural coincidence ; the second by ideological dualism. Thus, the novel's narrative structure is inseparable from its intertextual genesis : from its critical reaction towards the humanist-Christian sociolect and its dualistic discourses.

In presenting these three models which sum up essential arguments of my latest research<sup>34</sup>, I do not pretend to give a detailed illustration of the first part's theorems, but would like to show how these might be applied in practice.

## SOCIAL PRACTICES AND INTRATEXTUAL MEDIATION : TOWARDS A TYPOLOGIE OF *Idéosèmes*\*

Edmond CROS

When one inquires into the modalities of the transcription of social facts and, in particular, of the socio-economic organization of a given society in its cultural productions, the problem of mediation immediately arises. A double problem, in reality : a determination of by what means social formations are encoded in textual structures is necessary, whatever may be the discursive and/or pre-discursive pathways which, arising not in reality but in its representation, lead to their textual expression. All these terms are problematic. An initial, superficial and positivist approach to the question would hypothesize that the mimetic representation of reality implies a prior awareness of reality. Now, it is in the gap shown by this hypothesis that Sociocriticism operates, in that it is interested neither in the awareness of reality nor in mimetic

\* Translated from French by Catharine Randall.

<sup>1</sup> In the following theoretical study, I use textual analyses which have been the object of previous publications. As these analyses developed it seemed possible to reformulate the results in order to advance theoretical reflexion and to signify in particular the positions I've been able to propose in *Théorie et pratique sociocritiques* (Paris/Montpellier, Éditions Sociales, CERS) in particular those of *Idéosèmes* and *Intratextual Microsemiotics*. Other than *Théorie et pratique sociocritiques*, the reader can refer to *Imprévue* 1985-1 (study on *Cumanda* in *Écrire l'Espace*) and in the same issue of *Sociocriticism* 1985-2, « The Values of Liberalism in *Periquillo Sarniento* ».

<sup>34</sup> See : *L'indifférence romanesque*. Sartre, Moravia, Camus, Paris, Le Sycomore, 1982 et *Manuel de Sociocritique*, Paris, Picard, 1985.

reproduction. While mimetic representation would, and does, depend on an analytical discourse in the form of an ensemble of elements and observations disseminated throughout the fictional text, Sociocriticism postulates, on the contrary, that these social facts undergo a process of transformation which encodes them in the form of structural and stylistic elements.

We thus see emerging an initial difficulty of epistemological nature: what is in fact required is that we move from the continuity of 'the real' to a textual structure whose formation presupposes:

--- that relationships among previously privileged elements of this reality and elements seen as pertinent to the text transcribing this reality be established;

--- that these relationships be translated in conceptual and abstract terms.

It is therefore a matter (and this is the whole problem) of proceeding from the *non-discursive* to the *discursive*.

An unavoidable question arises at the beginning of our investigation: How is the continuity of 'the real' perceived? Can it be said to be structured or pre-structured? Is the structuring we would claim to perceive present in the object, or in the representation the critic himself forms of the object? If in fact structuring occurs, would it not rather already be in a discourse contemporaneous with the text produced? Such a case would suppose that such structuring is the result of a representation antedating the text, and not of an intrinsic quality of the object. My response to this first set of questions will closely influence the question next proposed, which will concern the articulation--temporarily taken as pre-existent--of the object and the textual structure. In the first instance, that of no pre-existing discursive mediation, in my attempt to understand the object of my study I am led to establish relationships among a certain number of elements seen as pertinent. In so doing, I construct *my* representation of reality. However, the relationships which I establish translate in discursive terms elements which have nothing to do with the discursive. This then leads me to apply to the process of writing a system of comprehension deduced from the analysis of facts having nothing to do with textual categories; this renders null any possibility of articulation and implies the absence of semantic mediation. Indeed, it is this epistemological void which the concept of homology proposed by genetic structuralism reveals. Neglecting the indispensable study of the discursive articulations both exterior to and within the text, Goldmann avoids asking the

question--both the most difficult to formulate and to resolve-- of how mediations function within the framework devised by structuralism.

This is a dual problem, for the nature of the mediation must be specified, and this is a preoccupation which only partially relates to the preceding concern. What is the filter interposing itself between 'the real' and the text? More specifically, between on the one hand 'the real', and on the other, both successively and coterminously, with the representation of this reality, the formulation of the representation and of the structure of the text enter? The *I* and the *We*, doubtless, but where else? What are the modalities of the *We* intervention? Here again, there are only two possible responses: this mediation can only come through the consciousness (which does not necessarily mean a clear state of consciousness), or through the material of language and the process of writing. But, if I take consciousness to be mediation, how can I explain that the fictional work's field of *social readability* can be significantly larger than the individual's field of *social visibility*? Goldmann resolves this difficulty, as we know, by resorting to the notion of « world view », which is an extrapolation constructed from the standpoint of the trans-individual subject's awareness of reality, and that of his unconscious. But, in so doing, Goldmann merely displaces the problem, for he does not enlighten us concerning textual mechanisms which could be the linguistic and semantic vectors of the accomplishment of this extrapolation. Besides,--and here we arrive at the second solution mentioned above-- the only mode of existence for the consciousness is that of the discourse, and no matter what the level of consciousness retained, whether of individual consciousness or collective consciousness, the gap between the writer's field of *social visibility* and the text's field of *social readability* can only be detected through discursive traces. This gap is therefore only measurable by the analysis of the text's discourse, that is, by the analysis of the language material (included in this the social discourse) deconstructed by the writing process.

It is at precisely this point that I propose to intervene, suggesting that this process of writing is, to a certain degree, at a certain level and according to certain modalities I propose to examine, directed and regulated by something arising from the collectivity, 'the social', the *Us*.



Before pursuing this further, certain preliminary principles should be suggested :

(1) When speaking of the relations of social structures to textual structures, we are speaking, in reality, of two different structuring mechanisms; in the first case, we evoke the product of finalized human activities, and laws which scientific knowledge attempts to discover possess a supposedly objective nature. It's a totally different matter when this object is represented, for the laws which direct the structuring of representation reconstitute the referent in a way which, for brevity's sake, will be called *arbitrary*. That is to say that the same original structuring can, theoretically, produce multiple and divergent secondary structurings. Besides, the laws of the structuring of social totalities--such as, for example, the family, the production enterprise, and social formation--are neither perceived nor perceivable as laws at the level of the immediacy of the lived experience. At that level, reality is only a chaotic *continuum*, while, contrarily, representation necessarily implies that these anarchic elements are put into relationships, that is, a projection of structural order. Structuring is indeed that which organizes the interiorized projection of 'the real' through a primary or secondary system of established relationships. To represent is to institute relationships which structure the object. Structuring is the specific characteristic of representation, that which distinguishes it from the immediacy of lived reality and from that which would be its simple mimetic reproduction. It is with representation and only with representation that structure is instituted; indeed, there is no representation which is not structured. The question therefore is to determine how that which is supposed to be *objective* survives in that which is supposed to be *arbitrary*.

If one accepts this point of view, certain 'givens' appear more clearly :

(a) the epistemological illusion of genetic structuralism which, establishing an homology between a supposed social structure and a textual structure, establishes in fact a relationship between two representations, of which the first is not identified as such but rather given as intrinsic to the object;

(b) the genetic function of successive mechanisms of structuring the successive representations which intervene in the process of semantic transformation;

(c) the analysis of the discourse--or rather of multiple inter-regulating discourses--as the only recourse in the search for the

mechanisms of mediation. Every representation in effect is organized around a semantic system which can be located and identified : structuring is, in this case, inscribed within representation;

(d) the fundamental role played in this semiosis by the representation of the reality, the ideology. When, from representation to representation, we move toward the exterior of the text, we indeed come up against this first and generative filter. Here, this anarchic and chaotic continuum of the real [which I have called a non-structure at the level of the immediacy of lived experience, and which until now has escaped the discursive domain is modeling itself into a discursive shape.] This demonstrates why the semiotics of the ideology constitutes the keystone in the argumentative strategy of Sociocriticism.

(2) To present the ideology as discursive representation implies however that we would opt for an Althusserian definition of ideology, that we suggest that the ideology has no

ideal existence, conceptual, spiritual but material...that is always exists within an apparatus and its practice or practices...regulated by rituals, in which these practices are inscribed at the center of the material existence of an ideological apparatus, be it only of minor scale, a little mass in a little church, a burial, a little game in a sports club, a day of classes in school, a get-together or a political meeting.<sup>2</sup>

At the point closest to the reality it affects, the materialized ideology thus forms a bridge between the non-discursive and the discursive, and it is within the system of representations specific to it that, at the beginning, reality enters, distributes and arranges itself. Indeed, the ideology constitutes the fundamental articulation of culture and social life. From the epistemological point-of-view, this concept has the advantage, compared to Goldmann's « world vision », of offering a self-sufficient discourse, *here and now* present in its totality, without necessitating recourse to hypothetical and always risky extrapolations.

(3) The ideological is a combination of primary contradictory structures. I will refer here to T. Herbert's hypotheses, already recalled in *Sociocritical Theory and Practice*, which distinguish between two forms of ideology : an *empirical* form referring to the process of production, and a *speculative* form, directed towards

<sup>2</sup> L. Althusser, « Les appareils idéologiques d'État » in *Positions* (« The Ideological Apparatuses of the State »)



production's social relationships. « Each of these fills a distinct function : in the first, the position of agents in the process of production is « disguised...in other signifying chains which at the same time effectively signify this position and hide it from them. » The second aims at allowing the subject to identify with political and ideological structures and especially...gives him the illusion that he is the originator of his ideas, of his subjectivity. Thus, the mechanisms of ideological subjugation answer to a double guarantee, an empirical guarantee re-linked with 'reality' and a speculative guarantee ».<sup>3</sup>

(4) Concerning materialized ideology, I will only mention here the social practices which can be associated either with the State Apparatus (military, police or legal) or with the Ideological State Apparatuses (Church, Family, School), and the *discursive practice* which each of these social practices is likely to generate. In addition, I will assert that every social practice constitutes, in its own way, a *representation* of the social problematic, and that a discourse, iconic, gesture- or language-specific, can always be perceived. The materialized ideology as originating point of the cultural seems to me to be a discursive articulation where the previously formless 'real' and 'social' are structured around contradictory polarities.

This theoretical critical positioning postulates in the final analysis a dependence of cultural objects on various forms of social practices. I would like to demonstrate this in a series of examples which will enable me to propose, in the second part of this study, an outline of the typology of different methods of articulation of these social practices on the fictional work. To do so, I will resort to textual analyses I have already made, but of which I feel it will be useful to regroup the conclusions around the problem at hand. I am referring to four cases found in the Spanish picaresque novel.

# 1. *Lazarillo de Tormes* (Spain, 16th century, circa 1550)

## 1.1. A discursive practice related to the Apparatus of the Inquisition.

The nature and function of the autobiographical discourse create certain problems here. Below is briefly summarized the data of the issue :

<sup>3</sup> Th. Herbert, « Remarque pour une théorie générale des idéologies » (« Remarks Concerning A General Theory of Ideologies ») in *Cahiers pour l'analyse*, summer 1968, 9.

a. The author (of the prologue) and the narrator (producer of the narrative) both designate an identical *I*.

b. This *I* addresses (in both cases) the same destinee, designated as Your Grace.

c. the narrative is supposed to have been written at Your Grace's request.

d. the autobiography is divided into sections, each preceded by an epigraph written in the third-person and intended to summarize that which follows. Thus, the First Section appears in this manner : « Lazarus recounts *his* life and who *his* father was. Know therefore Your Grace, before anything else, that *I am* called Lázaro de Tormes... »

1.2. This communicative situation resembles an autobiographical practice common in Spain since the fourteenth century which had been imposed by the Tribunals of the Inquisition :

the accused was obliged either to write his autobiography in order to justify the crime of heresy or the 'amoral' deviation of which he was accused, or to report orally before the Tribunal of the Inquisition. The clerks of the Tribunal transcribed these autobiographies verbatim, even using the first-person pronoun, the third-person only being used for the epigraphs which fragmented the accused's narration.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the interplay between the *He* (epigraph) and the *Me* (narrator's tale) transcribes the relationship which, in the social practice, distinguishes the clerk scribe/ from the accused speaker.

## 1.3. The Transcription of an epistolary practice.

The structure of epistolary exchange is implied, thanks to a semantic significance produced by the prologue in the following forms :

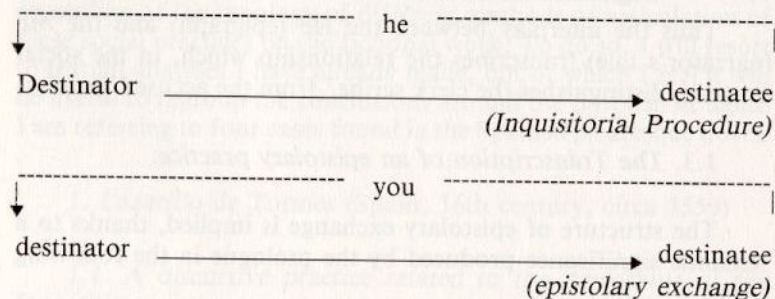
- a. an introductory topic
- b. a prefatory letter
- c. the actual letter
- d. an 'open' letter (or, at least, the characteristics of an 'open' letter).

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Gómez Moriana, text given at the Colloquium on Procedures of verification. Montreal 1976, reprinted in E. Cros/A. Gómez Moriana, *Lecture idéologique du Lazarillo de Tormes*, Montpellier, CERS, 1985.



The prologue specifies that the autobiography which follows answers a question already asked of the narrator by the destinee: « And since Your Grace writes that I must write you and relate the case in a detailed manner... » The autobiography is itself articulated on the prologue by a « Let Your Grace then know that... » which allows Lazarillo to again speak after having been interrupted temporarily by the scribe who has just announced the contents of the First Section. Through the expedient of the prefatory letter, Lazarillo thus finally regains his discursive autonomy, and it is indeed this structural inversion in relation to the inquisitorial process which is, above all, subversive.

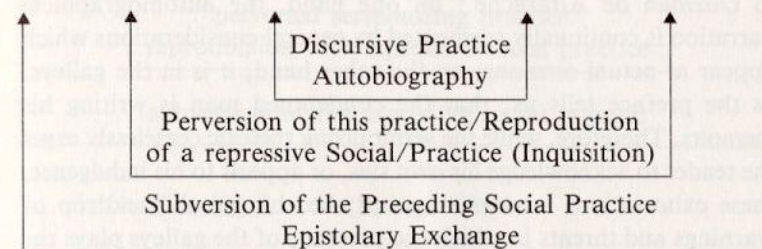
Besides, the closes circuit which characterizes the epistolary exchange somewhat modifies the communication situation imposed by the inquisitorial procedure—at least, if one takes into account what I call the 'mirror-like' effect of the autobiographical discourse (the image of himself which the self-narrating subject sees being constructed in his listener's eyes, and in relation to which his own discursive strategy develops). While in the inquisitorial procedure these 'reflections' are translated in the form of the *Non-Person* (in the refracted image that the scribe gives me of myself, I become *Him*), in the case of circular communication, on the contrary, these effects in reverse impose upon the subject the image of a *You*.



(The dotted lines indicate the 'mirror' effect).

When the projection of *I* in the form of the *Non-Person* translates the mirror effect, the subject's enclosure is evidently redoubled thereby. The destinator dictates to the confessing subject the standards meant to reproduce his norms on the implied destinees.

It can be seen that in *Lazarillo de Tormes*, and in relation to the diagram of inquisitorial procedure, the structure of circular communication demonstrates a claim to identity. In implanting a listener, Lazarillo in some way constructs a reflectiveness where he is able to project himself as *You*, for to be *Yours* is to exist.



## 2. Guzmán de Alfarache (Spain, 1597-1604)

### 2.1. A Social practice resulting from the perversion of sermonizing.

During the sixteenth century at least, preaching was, in Spain, directly linked to social repression. Thus, in many cases, the execution of condemned men was preceded or followed by preaching aimed at having an impact all the more vivid as the living dramatization being enacted. The horror of the gallows appeared to the generally large audience as the concrete and tragic present consequence of an individual's supposed error. Beyond the heads of the great majority of the spectators, the preacher addresses all the participants he imagines to be guilty of similar sins and deserving of the punishment inflicted on the day's victims :

How many men have remained to contemplate how justice was served on the heads of other individuals who did not merit it as much as they themselves, and how many times have I told them so during the course of the sermon itself.

Thus, the sermon is aimed at two different publics : while it functions for some as a simple warning, for others it is an explicit menace. In both cases, the manner in which it functions transforms it into a concrete and ritual act of social repression, in which Christian morality appears as gallows, thereby taking upon itself all the rigor of human justice and transforming, in reversed



*idéosèmes* in a new code, the system of ethical and abstract considerations from which it had developed. This means that the relationship which the preaching act maintains with the world of marginality has radically changed in meaning.

Now this relationship is recorded in a form barely transposed in *Guzmán de Alfarache*: on one hand, the autobiographical narration is continually segmented by general considerations which appear as actual sermons; on the other hand, it is in the galleys, as the preface tells us, that the condemned man is writing his memoirs. Therefore, while the sermonizing rhetoric ceaselessly urges the reader to acknowledge his own sins, or appeals to his indulgence, these exhortations intervene against the changeless backdrop of warnings and threats in which the presence of the galleys plays the role assigned to the gallows in corresponding social practice.

This relationship between — gallows and preaching  
— galley  
transcribes the perversion of a social practice, as well as the objective alliance of the repressive State Apparatus (Inquisition) with the dominant Ideological Apparatus in a feudal social formation (Religion), just as it does in *Lazarillo de Tormes* if one takes the autobiographical discourse to imply a 'general confession'.

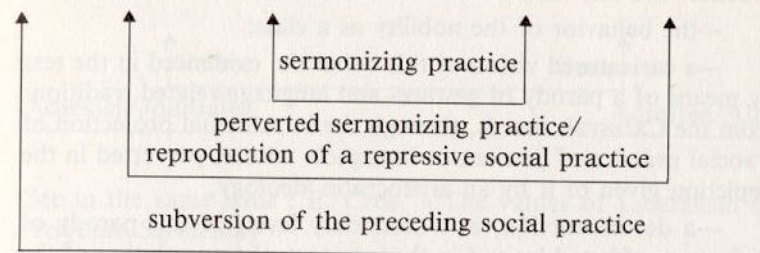
## 2.2. The Subversion of this practice.

Other discourses function in the text, specifically:

---a rhetorical practice, which the preface finds useful to justify:

---the discursive practice of commercial environments. This practice attributed to a speaker likewise described in his criminal incarnation obviously plays on the perverted sermonizing practice. It is the condemned man who, at the gibbet, speaks to us and, in some way, demands of us an accounting, so that, in his mouth, all the Christian morality communicated by the authentic sermonizing tradition, is regenerated and resumes its original purity. It is striking to note that this same reversal of the communication situation is found in *Lazarillo de Tormes*, through the same effacing of the representatives of the dominant practice, who allow speech to him to whom speech had until now been denied and thereby enable his

rebirth as the discursive subject. The result is a diagram in every way similar to that proposed for *Lazarillo*:



## 3. *La Vida del Buscón* (Spain, 1626)

I will not go into great lengths concerning *El Buscón* which I have elsewhere analyzed at great length. However, let us review first the historical facts which, in my opinion, are brought to bear here: in the first place, a classical historical contradiction which, in industrial and commercial Segovia, opposes a bourgeoisie jealously kept from political power against a nobility which feels progressively deprived of economic power. These then are elements of mentality which mediate an historical conjunction but do not mediate directly its insertion into the fictional text, and which translate the anti-semitism of the class dominant in Spain at the beginning of the 17th century. Now, this data is encoded in the text through the evocation of two social practices, the festive carnivalesque practice and the inquisitorial practice once again. What specifically seems in question is bourgeois behavior, which is imitative behavior, and besides that, somewhat different, the bourgeois view of the aristocracy is in question. These are two elements which are caricatured in the way in which the narrative instance reconstitutes the look Pablos gives to the substitute character Don Diego, just as in the network of textual traces which specifically configurate Don Diego. Thus, the bourgeois mentality is inscribed simultaneously in the form of an ensemble of observable material and in that of a caricatured point-of-view which is supposed to caricature the narrative instance. Most striking, in the final analysis, is that deliberately disfigured projection of oneself in the Other's awareness, a textual phenomenon which poses new questions.

If the diagram developed from the projection of *Guzmán de Alfarache*'s structure onto that of *Lazarillo de Tormes* is used to



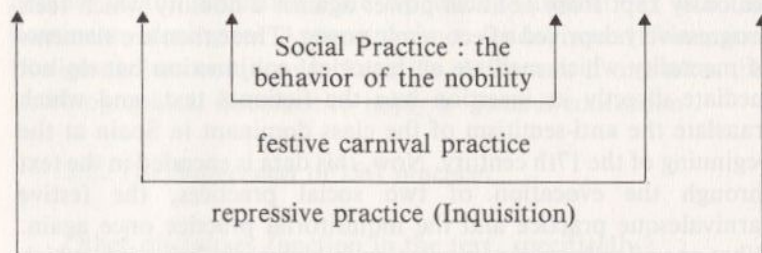
perceive these different phenomena, one finds that three social practices are implied :

---the behavior of the nobility as a class;

---a caricatured vision of this behavior, evidenced in the text by means of a parody of gesture- and language-related traditions from the Carnival, that is, through the intratextual projection of a social practice of peasant or bourgeois nature, perverted in the depiction given of it by an aristocratic ideology,

---a deconstruction, at a secondary level, of this parody of caricature, effected by and in the intratextual transcription of the repressive apparatus of the Inquisition.

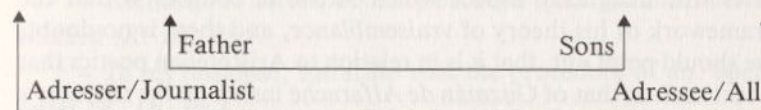
We again find here, even though regulated by a function contradictory to that which regulates the two preceding texts, the three articulations we have already specified. They are, consequently, designated according to a similar diagram :



#### 4. *Periquillo Sarniento* (Mexico, 1815,1816)

Semantized by two overlapping wills and presented explicitly in turn as the text of a will, *Periquillo Sarniento* is articulated on a social practice which it does not merely transcribe but which it seems to question, since its existence as a public text is only due to the violation of the fundamental standards shrouding a dead man's desires. But the fact that the narrative authority appoints a journalist to become the actant of the transgression gives this transgression a significance which goes beyond the mere anecdote. We shall therefore consider how complex the communication

situation is which links together two seemingly irreconcilable systems :



(See in the same issue : E. Cros, « The values of Liberalism in *Periquillo Sarniento* )

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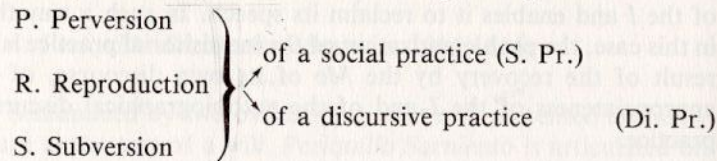
At the level of their primary or secondary structures, all these articulations seem to me to problematize the relationship inscribed in the corresponding social practice between a discursive practice and he who manipulates it. This is even more apparent in *El Buscón* for Pablos or his father who, even while seeming to be the « dregs of society », manipulate conceptual metaphors, and for *Guzmán* where the doubly denigrated figure of the criminal/merchant has assumed the preacher's pulpit. The situation is the same for *Periquillo Sarniento*, in which a will, destined by its author not to be divulged beyond the family circle, is entrusted to a journalist. There seems to be greater complexity in *Lazarillo de Tormes*; actually, however, (but this time in the corresponding social practice) the problem of the autobiographical practice of confession and perversion already arises, which is to say that at the level of the primary structure of representation there is no problematization of the social practice; it only intervenes to the extent that another practice (epistolary) is articulated which re-establishes the identity of the *I* and enables it to reclaim its speech. In such a way that, in this case, the problematization of the inquisitorial practice is the result of the recovery by the *Me* of its own discourse, of the appropriateness of the *I* and of the autobiographical discursive practice.

It is obvious that, in society, different discursive practices are the concrete representations of the hierarchy ; they are distributed in function of their reproductions of the confrontations of the social classes, in which they sketch out boundaries and, consequently, taboos. Themselves representations of 'the real', their effect is to produce secondary representations which sustain a social 'imaginary' at the center of which the relationship between he who speaks and



the manner *in which he speaks* is transformed into a relationship between he who speaks and the manner *in which he should speak*. It is this imaginary aspect which Aristotle codifies within the framework of his theory of *vraisemblance*, and there is no doubt, we should point out, that it is in relation to Aristotelian poetics that a text such as that of *Guzmán de Alfarache* insists on the narrator's competence, while this competence is implicit in Buscón's case, for he is supposed to have studied at the university. But the problem I'm raising here is significantly different : no longer is there question of technical competence but rather of the speaker's status, of the social role he fills in society. The very fact that specific mention is made of the narrator's linguistic competence signals that his technical ability is actually inadequate and does not allow him to have access to the roles to which he aspires. The enunciatory context thereby translates a contradiction between discursive competence and the position of power this competence is supposed to confer. The discursive practice appears even more to be a space of power usurped or waiting to be taken over, than as any ability to manipulate a certain rhetoric. We are not referred to the discourse itself but, in effect, to the functioning of the social practice, a function which lends itself to be seen, in this case, as a metonymic transcription of the Apparatus (State or Ideological State Apparatuses) concerned. This is equally evident for *Periquillo Sarniento*, in which it is not the testamental utterance which is problematized, but rather the judicial testamental practice.

Analysis of the four novels temporarily serving as our experimental field show us that the inappropriateness shown in the text can be viewed either as a perversion, or as a subversion, of the apparatus, so as to produce the following six figures :



We find these same cases in the following examples :

#### 1. *Lazarillo de Tormes*

+ Interplay between the first-person narrative and the epigraphs written in the third-person (*R. Di. Pr.*) but this same articulation can be codified in the form

- either of a perversion of autobiographical practice (*P. Di. Pr.*)
- or of the reproduction of a repressive social practice (*R. S. Pr.*)
- + Exchange of correspondence between Lazarillo and Vuestra Merced (*R. Di. Pr.*)
- + In his response, Lazarillo uses the procedure of an 'open' letter (*R. Di. Pr.*)

This same perversion, however, is in turn articulated on the perversion of the autobiographical discourse which is the result of the inquisitorial practice and, thereby, can be seen, as subversion of it. (*S. S. Pr.*)

#### 2. *Guzmán de Alfarache*

- + The significance of the galley remains present in the background of the speaker's preaching discourse (*R. S. Pr.*) This can also be encoded in the form
- of the perversion of the sermon's social practice (*P. S. Pr.*)
- + Guzmán, a criminal, has seized the discursive space of power
- + Guzmán, a merchant, has taken over the discursive space of power

#### 3. *El Buscón*

- + Utilizing visual and language carnival traditions (*R. S. Pr.*)
- + Awkward and heterodox use of conceptual rhetoric (*P. Di. R.*)
- + Systematic unmasking (*R. S. Pr.*)

#### 4. *Periquillo Sarniento*

- + Testamental structure (*R. S. Pr.*)
- + Intimate tone (*R. Di. Pr.*)
- + Relationship between the reader and the journalist-editor (*R. S. Pr.*)



Evidently, the same relationship can be seen as a perversion or subversion of a discursive or social practice and, at the same time, a simple transcription of another practice. The way these articulations inter-relate is responsible for the different types of semantic significance. The structures which are organized in this way around contradictory primary or secondary relationships are increasingly complex.

In a previous study, I proposed to call these primary relationships *idéosèmes*, (Cf. *Sociocritical Theory and Practice*) in such a way that the six diagrammed cases we have just seen correspond to as many possible types of *idéosèmes*. Let me specify that these *idéosèmes* only define relationships which generate structures. Devoid of any semantic content, they are none the less potential vectors of any ulterior semantic displacement, and the propulsive elements of the entire meaning-producing process. They can therefore produce an infinite quantity of textual phenomena, according to how they are articulated among themselves, the different textual categories they influence, as well as the *apparatuses*, the discursive and social practices they imply.

Through these *idéosèmes*, ideological practices confer semantic significance on the material of the text. This semanticizing process occurs throughout the text and develops around specific elements which relay the generating *idéosèmes* and which therefore become, in turn, *idéosèmes*. Such is the case, in *Guzmán de Alfarache*, of every element having to do with the preaching discourse (proverbs, the citing of divine authority, entreaties, commonplaces of the sermonizing practice, *exempla*, etc...), once the original relationship between, on the one hand, preaching and on the other hand, socially repressive practice (the ritual of a sermon's delivery a few minutes before the executioner does his duty) has been made clear. This relationship is marginally transposed into the text in the only form possible since, contrary to what would occur with the gallows, in the logic of what is *vraisemblable*, the fiction of the time spent in the galleys is indispensable to the production of the autobiographical text. The *social readability* of each of these elements therefore depends on the establishment of relationships, whereby social encoding is regulated. What I mean by *readability* here is not that which directs the critic's or the reader's perceptions, but rather the aptness of the textual sign to transcribe the 'social', to read 'the real' like a scanner.

I qualify this network of *idéosèmes* as *intratextual micro semiotics*. The *idéosème* is thus, simultaneously, the point of origin of the structuring, and each of the elements which, throughout the text, replicates this origin. By *introtexual microsemiotics* I mean a significant ensemble of *idéosèmes*, discursive traces of very different nature organized, however, around an establishment of relationships among discursive or pre-discursive elements implying a social practice. Certain of those traces are found in the direct and explicit utterance of the text (Pablos, in *El Buscón*, convinces an old woman that she could be denounced to the Inquisition), or again in the unrolling of the story which the narrative is supposed to recount (one of the first episodes of *El Buscón* has to do with the carnivalesque student festival most widely practiced in the overall *Romania*, the festival of the king of the roosters; the executor of the will in *Periquillo Sarniento* is responsible for the reversal of narrative situations; Guzmán devotes several years of his life to commerce, etc...) What is involved here is a first category of possible productions of meaning which reproduce an *idéosème*, but which do not necessarily reproduce the structuring function. Such orientations ensure the primary function of any *intratextual microsemiotics* which consists in revealing the nature of the mediation (autoreferential function), since, as we know, the text records its decoding keys at the same time that it encodes its messages and utterances. Other *idéosèmes* verify, in depth yet in a much less immediately obvious way, the original *idéosème's* genetic function. In order to understand the laws regulating such a genetic system, it must be admitted that the relationships inscribed in this *idéosème* gain greater autonomy in relation to the social practice which produced the *idéosème*, as structuring is progressively complicated. Itself deconstructed in and through the very semiosis it generates, the ideological practice implied in this process reveals the stakes its function is to conceal. At this stage of the evolution of the genetic process, the problematization of the testamentary structure in *Periquillo Sarniento* is reduced to an opposition between that which one *inherits* by birth and that which one *acquires* by merit, (represented as *birth* ↔ *merit*), terms beyond which a more abstract dialectic between *Action* and *Passivity* appears. The carnivalesque practice similarly operates through its fundamental categories and, in particular, through demystification and inversion. In return, at the surface of the text, the different pheno-textual manifestations broaden the field in which these abstract tensions emerge and are expressed.



No matter what the complexity of the structuring among *idéosèmes*, it is interesting to observe that, in the case of the four texts examined, this structuring can be reduced to the following diagram :

[Apparatus → Social Practice → ] Discursive Practice ← vs → Discursive Practice ← [Social Practice ← Apparatus]

These results should be both distinguished from, and reconciled with, Renée Balibar's and Denis Laporte's hypotheses concerning literary styles and their relation to the national French language at that time of the democratic bourgeois revolution. They should be distinguished from them because the different discursive practices which my colleagues propose (those of 'elementary school' vs. those of 'humanistic' classes) are produced on the one hand by two scholarly/educational practices and thus have to do with the same State Apparatus and, on the other hand, structure the material of language constituting the utterance and not the text. In reconciling in fictional language two contradictory practices, these discourses (discursive practices) take into account the specificity of the literary discourse as an ideological form. The phenomena thus revealed do not directly concern the problem with which we are dealing. We will however consider them to the extent that, for the same purpose as the other examples I've cited, they imply a confrontation of contradictory practices, except that, at the level where Denis Laporte's and R. Balibar's observations coincide, these practices project an utopian space where class barriers dissolve, while I claim that the interplay of *idéosèmes* problematizes the representation of social practices (in a direction which, as Quevodo's case has shown, is not necessarily subversive). One can then acknowledge the multiplicity of the ideology's points of impact in the text and the contradictions present in its functioning.

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Even though we thus define the intratextual genetic center in conceptual terms, it is obvious what distinguishes us from genetic structuralism. In fact, we postulate the existence of a mediation which is :

- a. intratextual
- b. discursive
- c. meant to be seen as such, whence the importance we give to its auto-referential function, which attests to the inscription of a *representation* in the text (as defined above)

d. as all representations, organized according to an interplay of primary structurings which structure, in turn, the production of meaning, an hypothesis which enables to dispense with the concept of homology.

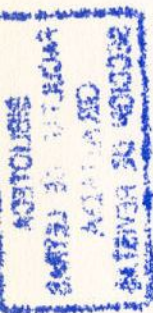
Even though the texts studied above belong to what is usually called the same literary 'genre', and though three among them imply the same repressive apparatus (the Inquisition), even though, in addition, the *idéosèmes* revealed articulate, above all, contexts of utterance, the conclusions drawn can nevertheless be generalized. I will illustrate this assertion by referring to a text where the modalities of the *idéosème*'s articulation are significantly different, namely *Cumandá*, a nineteenth-century Equatorian novel. The social practice which is involved there

- a. is so at the level of the utterance
- b. is a religious practice in the framework of agro-lunar rituals practiced by the Jivaros Indians.

This tale relates a festival celebrated in honor of Mother-Moon in the spring. The ceremony is celebrated at two times : the chief of the tribe receives symbolic offerings before lighting a log meant to conjure the shades at the moment of the old moon's agony, and which act is a prelude to the moon's resurrection. In the text, fire is thus one of the representations of the concept of the transition from death to life, from the old world to the new, from one cycle to another. This depiction of the cosmogonic act fills the spatial descriptions either through the image of fire (with only one exception, all sites recounted are lit afire), or by the images of genesis when the virgin forest is described, or again through the obsession with the cycle, as in that which shows rivers returning to their sources. In addition, it is this obsession which regulates the ideological reading possible of the novel.

But this sacred practice is deconstructed in the text's symbolic space by another religious practice, this time Catholic.

A field of research is thereby opened which remains to be explored and organized. The concepts of *idéosèmes* and *intratextual microsemiotics*, as I have defined them, allow us to fill the epistemological void of genetic structuralism to the extent that they intervene and interpose themselves in the process which takes us from the non-discursive to the discursive and from the pre-represented 'social' material to its textual representation--a process





### III. LINGUISTICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

## DISCOURSE ANALYSIS BETWEEN LINGUISTICS AND THE HUMANITIES : THE TIMELESS MISAPPREHENSION \*

*Régine Robin*

Would there be anything more common place today than to notice that the Humanities relating to language (and is there a section of the Humanities that does not deal with language ?) have developed within the frame of a violent reassessment of the language object defined by Saussure, by structural linguistics and by Chomsky ? P. Bourdieu, on several occasions, denounces the fundamental postulates of generative grammar : « By excluding any relationship between the functions of the linguistic statements and their structural characteristics, by privileging formal characteristics of grammar to the prejudice of functional constraints, the structure as opposed to the practice, Chomsky is mistaken. He favours the internal coherence of discourse, considered as receivable as long as it is not absurd, that is to say 'non-grammatical' within the purely *formalist* logic, to the detriment of adaptation to a situation which, when it is amiss, may throw the most coherent discourses into the absurd. Chomsky is overcome by the timeless illusion of the grammarian who disregards the spoken finality of language and the fact that discourse only exists for someone and in a situation : he knows and recognizes (at least implicitly) only the discourse deprived of an end and open to all ends, and the inexhaustible competence that permits the possibility of this end to a discourse valuable in any situation because it is not really adapted to any of them (...) » (P. Bourdieu, 1975, p.23). W. Labov also states that « Linguists, through a quite

\* Translated from French by Marc Lambert, Anne Vassal and Dominique Michaud.



unusual approach, have redefined their field in such a way that the everyday practice of language in the community is placed without the realm of linguistics itself. Rather than struggling with the difficulties of such a material, they elaborated theoretical reasons that permitted them to avoid its taking into account, and that recommended furthermore its disregarding by all linguists. » (W. Labov, 1976, p.350). In 1929, Bakhtin (Voloshinov) already protested the « Abstract Objectivism » of Saussure : « The real substance of language is formed neither by an abstract system of linguistic norms, nor by isolated enunciation, nor by the psycho-physiological act that produces it, but by the social phenomena of verbal interaction realized through the enunciation. Verbal interaction thus constitutes the fundamental reality of language. » (M. Bakhtin, 1977).

From another point of view, that of psychoanalysis, linguistics and its language object <sup>a</sup> are not spared either. One could read this quite typical diatribe in a recent publication : « Poetry fills in the faultiness of languages : linguistics systematically avoids this type of question; it considers languages as devoid of defects, just as simple bodies for the chemists, and planets for an astronomer (...), for a linguist, all languages are perfect, since they can be translated from one to another. For Mallarmé, each one of them is imperfect, because of their plurality itself. » <sup>1</sup>. (O. Mannoni, 1984). The argument is not new, but it is enduring, and it cannot be denied that during the last twenty or so years, the whole of Humanities, beyond its disciplinary divisions, has elaborated new objects, new fields of study by defining language, langue <sup>b</sup>, discourses and spoken word in a very different way than the linguists. To speak very schematically and while realizing these quick words should be more deftly explored, one witnesses the emergence of two great orientations, divided into many schools, groups and sub-groups, but conserving numerous bridges between themselves. The first

<sup>1</sup> In this same passage, O. Mannoni also writes that Benveniste and Jakobson partly escape his criticism. He would probably have benefited, as an analyst publishing on langue, from J.C. Milner's very enlightening comments, in my opinion, about Mallarmé and the relationships between the imaginary, both symbolic and real, in langue. « If this was realized, langue, on its own, would have merged with language as an Aleph from a legend; the laws of science recreate a place beyond any law. One may affirm that Mallarmé was not aiming at anything else (...) » (J.C. Milner, 1983, p.48).

<sup>a</sup> language object : we have used this expression to characterize language as an object. It is a translation of « l'objet langue ».

<sup>b</sup> langue : we have used the French term so as to distinguish between « language/langue/parole ».

movement relates to the social universe of language, under diverse denomination. Sociology of language, sociolinguistics, social linguistics, ethnology of communication, interactionism of communication and ethnomethodology are differentiated through the ambivalence of their overlappings and complementarity of approaches about the way in which social actors use language. This last term becomes a vast concept comprising a vision of the world, a vehicle of social representations, traces of power relationships, and ways to implicit knowledges or to socially structured practices and exchanges. This is an immense field that takes into account studies of the planification of languages, bilingual and multi-lingual behaviour, linguistic variation and « the whole of collective linguistic behaviour as it clashes and differentiates itself within the same global linguistic community » (J.B. Marcellesi, B.Gardin, 1974, p.15). This concept also includes the study of the appropriate use of language in different situations, while the interaction of the social practices of language sets to work a « Communication Competence » (Hymes), and also considers the langue within its social context, the langue as a produce of norms, the semantic fields of different cultures, and « the interactional approach of verbal behaviour ». (Gumperz). Sociology of language, variationistic sociolinguistics and ethnomethodology have progressed at different paces. They come from diverse epistemological horizons but share the desire to reassess the Saussurian definition of the language object and to define this object by its social aspect.

The second orientation partakes of the different « Pragmatics », that is of the examination of the relationships that exist between the signs and their use, from the heritage of Ch. Morris and Pierce to philosophers of language (Austin, Searle, etc...), notwithstanding German textual pragmatics. Language is not anymore simply thought of as a vehicle of communication and/or interaction, but as an act. To speak is then not only an exchange of information but rather realizing an utterance act, influencing the receiver, mastering within a frame of precise rules the communication situation, and modifying through the act the system of beliefs of the receiver, maybe even his behaviour. The illocutory value of a statement may only be understood with regard to the interlocution situation, since one should not confuse, as many phenomena indicate it, synonymity and ambiguity or the semantic and argumentative values of a same statement. Thus the power relationships and the communication situation are reintroduced

within the global aim, as well as a certain number of functions (performations, presuppositions, etc.) that are decipherable only by a reinsertion of the enunciating subject, by the complex problematics of the « who speaks » question. If, as Benveniste states, enunciation understands the individual conversion of the langue into discourse, and if, before enunciation, the langue is but a possibility of the langue, then diverse pragmatic and enunciative approaches reintroduce not only « subjectivity in language », but also a confrontation within dialogue, that is the power relationships translated but also induced by interlocution, and that the langue permits. If the sociologies of language, the different sociolinguistics and the ethnologies of communication are threatened by sociologism, the diverse approaches of enunciation and the pragmatics also give way to logicism. The history itself of linguistics might be summarized by this double tendency, that of the ambition to insure an absolute autonomy of the linguistic opposed to the empiricism of variationistic descriptions (F. Gadet, M. Pêcheux, 1977). Nevertheless, there are considerable convergences between all these approaches, and all of them, though in different ways, could be participating in the controversial program announced by P. Bourdieu in a famous article : « one may say that sociological criticism binds linguistic concepts to a triple displacement that substitutes the notion of *acceptability* to that of *grammaticality*, or in other words, the notion of legitimate language to that of language; the communication (or symbolic interaction) relationships are replaced by *symbolic power relationships* and at the same time, the question of the value and the *power* of the discourse replaces the question of the *meaning* of the discourse; finally and correlatively, *symbolic capital*, inseparable from the position of the locutor in the social structure, substitutes itself to the properly linguistic competence ». (P. Bourdieu, 1977, p.18).

We do not wish to denigrate the importance of these acquired experiences, of the renewal of researches, of the questioning, of the displacement of problems operated by this immense quest. We simply wish to recall that this contestation of the language object in Saussure or of the « Competence » in Chomsky is based upon a confusion of objects that matters to discourse analysis, to its constitution, its actual development and its possible future. At the core of an ensemble of misapprehensions and confusions, one notices the covering up of the « rule » by the « norm » or, in more traditional terms, the confusion of an objective norm, internal to

the system of the language, with an ensemble of evaluating traits, upgrading or degrading an accent, an idiom, that are eminently social. W. Labov criticized the positions of Chomskian linguistics in order to establish sociolinguistics. He explains himself at length. After mentioning purely normative type III rules that state, for example, that someone who, in English, pronounces « then » with a « d » sound should be classified as « illiterate », after mentioning type II rules of standard or good usage taught at school that are semi-imperative, W. Labov adds : « Most linguistic rules have a totally different character. They correspond to automatic, deep rooted behaviour. They are not perceived by one's consciousness and are never broken into. Linguists have discovered and formulated type I rules for centuries, and they are the focus of most of our researches. They constitute the backbone itself of the linguistic structure. Without them, it would be very difficult to express anything whatsoever. If English teachers had the task to dispense knowledge of type I rules of the English language to children, the work they would have to accomplish would be incredibly more difficult than the task they are in effect responsible of. They simply teach children a small number of type II rules as well as a basic terminology that permits the speaking of the tongue ». (Labov, 1974, p.95).

Over and above usage, that is what is socially qualified as good usage, as well said and poorly said, over and above dialects, and even standard dialects considered as normative, one finds the « grammatical fact » (J.C. Milner), langue as form, as regulated materiality. It is necessary to postulate that nothing is truly fortuitous in a language; rather fundamental rules govern word order, metaphoric and metonymic systems, rhythmic accents and the lexical memory. « A heteroclit structure which is nonetheless oriented towards regulation » (J.C. Milner, 1983, p.45), langue in materialistic reality, in what one might term the symbolic nature of langue, is concerned neither with logical order nor with social order. As a representable and formalizable system only within the heterogeneous, the open endedness and the equivocal aspects of its elements must not be confused with the censures and the interdictions of political order. In this way, when R. Barthes complains of being obliged to use, in French, the genders, of never being able to use the neuter form, of having to assert himself as the subject; in short, when he states that language is « facist » (R. Barthes, 1978, pp.13-14), he superimposes the inflexible aspect of



the rule, which as such engenders its own impossibility, with the censurable aspect, or at least he indicates that the two are superimposable. In truth, one is perfectly free to temper with the rule, its limits, its edges, by way of certain jests which relate not the meaning, but to certain poetic usages (which nonetheless can often be found in the most ordinary usagers) of the langue. This is Humpty Dumpty's dream taken to its extreme. Instead of the traditional definition of poetry that would be a divergence from the norm, one should reflect on the way poetry plays upon the norm. Therefore, when P. Bourdieu questions a standard langue, an abstract object, an artefactual utensil that nobody uses neither to communicate, nor to express oneself, nor to dominate, nor to jest, he is criticizing the imaginary quality of a normative langue that is not thought of in terms of the regularity essential to the language object. In effect, if the langue is solely thought of as a good that is socially distributed according to a purely social designation related to prestige and legitimacy, it is a fanciful undertaking then to forge a standard langue. There are but dialects and evaluated social practices. Accordingly, one of the objects of sociology of language is to pinpoint these distributions as hierarchical relationships. But this has nothing to do with the language object that is not a standard level of usage, but a heterogeneous entirety of impassable regularities.<sup>2</sup> Formal linguistics, so often contested of late, has made a great deal of progress in the understanding of these notions of faults, borders, points of impossibility and points of the interweaving of the discursive and the linguistical; it centered its attention on the decompactification of levels (phonological, syntactical, etc.) to reflect on langue in terms of non-stabilized set, in terms of layered structure, etc. Among the phenomena that questioned the language object in its regularities, a certain number of syntactic problems are unclassifiable and their analysis calls for other processes more complex than grammatical regularity. They impose a destratification of langue, a considering of it within the dimension of the non-identical: shifters, pronouns, deictic indicators, expletive negations, and certain types of interrogation are exemplifications of this passage to another dimension. Amongst these phenomena, glossolalia is most revealing. J.J. Courtine showed recently that « it produces the appearance of a linguistical form that it simultaneously exceeds: this is the image of langue

<sup>2</sup> For anything that regards criticism, see in particular F. Kerleroux, « La Langue passée aux profits et pertes » in *L'Empire du sociologue*, Paris, Maspero, 1984, pp. 53-69.

inscribed in its excess ». (J.J. Courtine, 1983, p.45). Furthermore, P. Seriot has shown to what extent translation exposes specific systems of constraints, of inherent incompleteness which oppose two languages: « Translation is not a metalanguage, since the language into which a text is translated has its own system of « impossibles », its own network of obligatory elements and of potentially implicit elements. Translation is thus a movement toward another system of specifications, which is based on the materiality of the second language ». (P. Seriot, 1984, p.140). Lastly, compound words, « witz », and jokes bring into play regular poetic and connotative functions, tropes, everything that has to do with the exception, or with what J. Milner calls « the monsters of language ». If, indeed, « it is in fact a property of natural language to render possible a nonsensical discourse » (S. Delesalle et al., 1980, p.111), one must question, as does A. Grésillon, the strange fact that the speaker is always bound by regularities, even when he contrives to subvert them. (A. Grésillon, 1985, p.225). There is also a disturbance created by the « glimmering » effects brought on by paraphrase (F. Gadet, M. Léon, 1984, p.45). Finally one finds disturbance in the staggering produced by the undoubling of the speaker, by the polyphonism inherent to language (O. Ducrot, 1984), by the heterogeneousness that constitutes it (J. Authier, 1982) and that postulates not only the death of the sovereign subject, but also of the sole, undivided subject.

One can see the extent to which linguistics has evolved and the direction this evolution has taken. Far from creating a « perfect » langue, one which could be completely formalized into mathematical models, on the contrary, linguistics has uncovered without sacrificing its formal requirements, the weaknesses, the limitations, the excess which affect language. Far from being reducible to the influence of a political or a social order (even if it is socially definable) language is of a material nature, a system of inflexible constraints in which there are elements impossible to verbalize or to formalize (this explains why any given language is unique unto itself); an instable, heterogeneous, openended system, caught « between the mirage of a language without rules and the fantasy of a language regulated in a stable and categoric manner ». (F. Gadet, 1981, p.124). It is obvious that these interrogations on langue, on processes that have long been laboured in literature, border the signifier and the unconscious. For many years, J.C. Milner has been successfully exploring the relationships between

language and langue, « intertwining (by which) the point where desire concepts a human science is unveiled, locus of the tying, if one cares to notice it, of an intelligible relationship with a possible theory of desire. » (J.C. Milner, 1978, p.25). Thus, to misapprehend the inherent aspect of langue is also to misapprehend the unconscious, the lack; it is to encircle oneself within communication approaches that concern usage, something that traps langue and reduces it to language.

Enough has been said, even allusively, to point out the extent to which the stakes of langue will weigh in the definition of the specificity of discourse analysis, if this term is understood both in M. Foucault's sense - as an intertwining of textual series, forming objects, statements, devices, strategies - and in the sense of the linguists, given that interdiscursivity exceeds the borders of the sentence.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the ambiguity of the notion of discourse is such that the dichotomies stated earlier have scattered discourse analysis into a multitude of approaches and theoretic and descriptive devices. There is a sociolinguistic discourse analysis (J.B. Marcellesi, B. Gardin), a semiolinguistics (P. Charaudeau, 1983), a psycho-sociosemiotics (Cl. Chabrol, 1984). Of course these methods communicate. We will admit, without being too eclectic, that some approaches, once rephrased, enlighten what we understand as discourse analysis. In the midst of its present dispersion of questionings and objects, the unavoidable point remains the reference to the specific *gammut* of langue that is but « a long detour to question the postulates of syntactic autonomy and the omission by linguistics of any history, especially its own » (J.J. Courtine, J.M. Marandin, 1981, p.32). In effect, it has become impossible to assimilate any regularity of langue to the grammatical rule, especially at the supra-sentence level. Discourse analysis, whether it studies texts that are stabilized or not, institutionally speaking, ordinary, conversational or not language, written or oral material, whether it tackles the mother tongue or the irreducibility of a foreign language, whether it grasps emergences and discursive circulations in past or present, discourse analysis will distinguish itself from the studies of language events conducted in the main Humanities by this double relationship to langue. On the one hand, discourse is woven with langue. It is therefore impossible to skirt the subject

<sup>3</sup> One will find definitions of the ambiguities of the term « discourse » in the addenda to the preparatory reports of the RCP-ADELA activity report and in D. Maingueneau, *Genèse du discours*, Bruxelles, Pierre Mardaga, 1984.

of systematicness, the moment of textual exemplification, the analysis of textual micro-functions which alone can provoke the emergence, within an account of the heterogeneous, of the multiple within the singular, the different within the infinitely repeatable and repeated, the other within the appearances of the same. On the other hand, discourse does not operate on the supra-sentence level of langue. Everything is problematic : sequences, elements of liaison, factors of effects, anaphoric and deictic functions, etc. « The description of a language strives to supply the rules which underlie the construction of all the sentences of that language, whereas the object of discourse analysis (...) appears to consist in the description of a real, unique and non-repeatable sequence ». (J.M. Marandin, 1979, p.18).

Ever since the initial formulations of M. Pêcheux and the publication of my book, which attempts to take stock of discourse analysis in history (M. Pêcheux, 1969; R. Robin, 1973), discourse analysis has experienced revisions, transformations, epistemological and methodological displacements. We lack space in which to retrace this experimental moment, in the positive interdisciplinary sense of the term; moment that experienced a revival with the research team ADELA, directed by M. Pêcheux. I should like to mention only some of these displacements and reformulations. Ten years ago (M. Pêcheux, 1975), the emphasis was put on the consistence of *discourse formations* (concept taken from Foucault and incorporated into discourse analysis), on an articulated set of concepts : conditions of production, discourse formation, ideologic formation, interdiscourse, intra-discourse, construct, etc. The goal was the elaboration of a global discourse theory capable of articulating the linguistic base (langue), the discourse processes, the subject or the subject-effect, and the historical perspective. Within the analysis of interdiscourse and of the set of forms expressing the « already-said » and the « already here », linguistically observable through the processus of paraphrase and presupposition (among others), as well as within the analysis of intradiscourse, of the guiding thread of the discourse, the sequential organization, the basics were construed in terms of both a limitation and an exteriority which dominated all the sequences. Enclosed in a complete determination, which left no room for dispersal or indetermination, the sets of utterances were derived from homogenous, coherent formations. One of the major displacements of discourse analysis, which paralleled the new discoveries in linguistics, the various crisis



in the Humanities and the new acquisitions in the history of mentalities, decompactified the discourse formations no longer conceiving them in terms of limitations but in terms of division, open/endedness, interiority/exteriority, borders/edges. This was done through the introduction of indeterminacy, inconsistency, contradiction and heterogeneousness. At the same time, focus was put on the guiding thread of the discourse, the description of local objects, of micro-functions, of language irregularities within descriptive discourse arts. Discursivity is considered from then on to be « a regulated space of scattered utterance ». (M. Pêcheux).

The second great displacement concerned archive reading and dealt with considerable textual sums that usually regard the activity of the historian (J. Guilhaumou, 1983, 1984 a, b; J. Guilhaumou, D. Maldié, 1979, 1984 a, b). Here again, there was a necessity to trespass the limitations of our methods in order to enlarge the discursive space. Our formal requirement had entailed a number of hitches. Using our charts and equivalence classes, one could only prove what historical knowledge already knew anyhow. The new departures permit the discovery and description of discursive patterns while accounting for their historicity. Three notions blaze the method: the thematic path, co-textual analysis and the corpus moment. Thematic path and co-textual analysis are two related notions. The former blazes a theme within the extreme limits of its textual horizon, its diachrony and thus its historicity. It brings to the fore linguistic and discursive characteristics common to statements given in the dispersion of archive devices that one deconstructs. Co-textual analysis is defined as follows by J. Guilhaumou: « The textual reconstruction labour, the blazing of the paths of statements produced by the labouring of lexical devices, words expressed and sentences without formal connexion but contextually akin to one another and/or placed in formal identity positions, but outside the relationships indexed by historians ». (J. Guilhaumou, 1984 b, p. 38). This analysis flattens the statements by denying their strategic load. From this stems the necessity of the corpus moment, of the point of linguistic systematicness that will emphasize confrontation, resistance, repetition/displacement, return and power relationship strategies. « At some points of a thematic path, lexical and/or syntactical questions may appear. The reference to linguistics intervenes as the organizational power of a corpus moment benefiting a reflexion on both langue and history. A linguistic approach, whatever it may be, does not force its analytical

model upon the whole textual field considered ». (J. Guilhaumou, 1983, p.21). Therefore, while closely paralleling the questions asked by historians but never dealing with the text without considering language facts or effects, the new discourse analysis related to history does not deliver an a priori knowledge of historical context over a formal analysis. It is a discovery process rooted in both textual historicity and the materiality of langue. The third displacement is related to the socio-ethnomethodological space, to the dialogic exchanges not stabilized by institutions imposing rhetorical generic constraints. The questioning of interpretative methods challenges the strict subject-object separation and is not satisfied with the traditional participating observations as a way to avoid the obstacle. These objections deconstructed from the inside the theoretic and conceptual arsenal of discourse analysis (B. Conein, 1985) within the frame of reassessments internal to the sociological discipline, as the relationship to the object, the status of cognition, the relationship between empirical knowledge and social knowledge produced by surveys and sociological discourses, the relationships to content analysis, discourse analysis of the everyday language and of conversations in particular was a renewal of the social pragmatics of the sociologies of language, whilst it kept in mind the langue and discursive effects, especially that of sequentiality.

Although several years ago discourse analysis was still attempting to conceptualize the discourse object as a theoretical object, today it appears to be able to apprehend only a *border-line object*. It operates on the edge of the principal disciplines, constituting in each case a troubled internal/external area. Removed from any a priori polemics concerning the humanities and/or linguistics, discourse analysis attempts to dispell the age-old misunderstandings that rendered dialogue difficult, insofar as it claims, without a trace of ecumenism or eclectism, to be neither an auxiliary discipline nor an autonomous field. By its tenacity, the very approaches of each discipline, discourse analysis emphasizes that language is irreducible to a set of acts, behaviour, social practices, or to a logico-semantic machine. Can we thus invoke a requiem for discourse analysis or, « Nouveaux Parcours » ? This article was not an attempt to retrace an itinerary, but rather to dissipate a certain number of misunderstandings created by a transparent conception of langue and discourse - conception which is still prevalent today in the humanities <sup>41</sup>.

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## ABSTRACTS

## I. THE SPECIFICITY OF LITERARY FIELD

PIERRE BOURDIEU, « *The concepts of habitus and field* » : P.B. underlines that these two concepts are inscribed in theoretical *lines* or *ancestries* which he reactivated and discloses the progressive construction of these two notions within his specific mode of thought.

JACQUES DUBOIS, « *Field, apparatus or institution ?* » In recent years, the analysis of literature as an autonomous institution has taken shape at the intersection of several various approaches or theories. In this way an object has been constructed, which, according to the contexts, is designated by the terms *apparatus*, *field* or *institution*. In the present study, these three terms form the subject of a comparison which reveals their implications from three points of view : the degree of organization of the literary system, its conditions of conflict, and its articulation with other systems.

D. SUVIN, « *Two Holy Commodities* ». Starting with Marx's distinction between use-value and exchange-value, Benjamin's discussions of correspondence between modern literature and commodity circulation, and Tocqueville analysis of US society, the article establishes a homology between the 19th-century rise of the modern press as the hegemonic form of written discourse and the contemporary sexual discourse. Cognition and erotics are thus two « holy commodities », increasingly rooted in the customer experience of repeated shocks based on excitement. The logic of capitalist circulation leads from the Sacred Object to the Bestselling Obsolescence.

JACQUES PROUST, « *Masters are Masters* ». Renée Balibar (*Le Français national*, 1974) thinks there is a contradiction between the language, as it is spoken by ordinary people, and the language in use in literary works, though it is in some respects the same language (national French). Nowadays, this contradiction is a part of a social conflict, and school is its main battlefield. The question is : was there such a conflict inside the « literary institution » before the French Revolution ? Taking as an example a letter supposedly written by a servant, in Laclos' *Liaisons dangereuses*, and comparing it with Leman's style, in *Clarissa Harlowe* (both in English and translated in French by abbé Prévost), we answer the question positively.

E. CROS, « *The Values of Liberalism in Periquillo Sarniento* » E. Cros examines the gap separating the discursive practice of Fernández Lizardi from the apparatus of literary institutions in Mexico just before Independence. This leads him to foreground in *Periquillo Sarniento* the utopian project of a unitary national linguistic practice, which corresponds to one of the fundamental conditions of liberalism. Then, approaching the text from the point of view of textual genetics, he reveals in it a *testamentary structure* which transcribes both the emergence of a new conception of the family and the valorization of *merit* at the expense of *birth*. Thus autobiographical confession appears as the vector of a discourse which goes beyond it and which opposes colonial and filial subjugation — a factor of passivity and locus of all that is *bestowed* — to the conquest of Independence by Action, which recognizes as a value only that which is *acquired*.

## II. SEMIOTIC AND INTRATEXTUAL MEDIATION

E. CROS, « *Social Practices and Intratextual Mediation : Towards a Typology of Ideosèmes* ». Inquiring into the mechanisms which mediate between the nondiscursive and the discursive, E. Cros proposes to make use of the concept of *ideosèmes*, conceived both as *semiotic* articulators (which structure the representations to which all social practices can be reduced) and as *discursive* articulators (transposed into the text, they furnish it with a structuring function of the same nature). He applies this concept to four Spanish language texts (Spain : 16th and 17th centuries ; Mexico : 19th century).

PIERRE ZIMA, « *Towards a Sociological Semiotics* ». The author examines the possibility of a synthesis between sociology and semiotics. On the one hand, this entails the conception of certain linguistic processes (lexical, semantic and narrative) as articulations of social interests : it is at the semantic level of *pertinence* and of *classification* that group interests penetrate discourse. On the other hand, it entails the definition of such sociological concepts as *collective consciousness* and *ideology* in a semiotic context. In the last part of the article, the author shows how certain *ideological discourses* are absorbed by literature at the *intertextual* level.

### III. LINGUISTIC AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

RÉGINE ROBIN, « *Discourses Analysis between Linguistics and the Humanities* ». *The Timeless Misapprehension* : The aim of this survey is to account for the use of the words « Discourse Analysis » in the *fields* of Linguistics and Human Sciences. It aims at placing discourse analysis apart from Sociolinguistics or from what could be called « Spontaneous sociology » — as it is practiced by sociologists — as well as from pragmatics so widely prevalent nowadays. Language woven with discourses, discourse woven with language. The author of this paper would like to underline that the study of language cannot be overlooked if one wants to avoid misapprehensions and misleading conclusions when using the clues of discourse analysis.

Pierre Bourdieu : Studies Director at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes*, professor at the *Collège de France* (Sociology Chair), Head of the Center of European Sociology of the *Collège de France* and *Ecole des Hautes Etudes*. He edits the Journal, *Actes de la recherche en Sciences Sociales*, Main publications : *Sociologie de l'Algérie* (1958), *Travail et Travailleurs en Algérie, le Déracinement, les Héritiers, les Etudiants et leur Etudes, Un art moyen* (1964), *Rapport pédagogique et Communication* (1965), *l'Amour de l'art* (1966), *le Métier de sociologue* (1968), *la Reproduction* (1970), *Théorie de la pratique* (1972), *Algérie 60* (1977), *la Distinction* (1979), *le Sens pratique* (1980), *Question de sociologie* (1980), *Ce que parler veut dire* (1982), *Homo Academicus* (1984).

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